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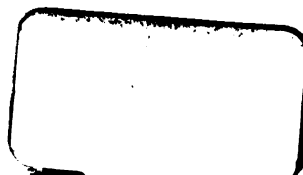
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THE DRAMATIC VALUES  
IN PLAUTUS

BY

WILTON WALLACE BLANCKÉ, A.M., PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF LATIN IN THE CENTRAL HIGH  
SCHOOL OF PHILADELPHIA

A THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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*Henry Thompson*

## FOREWORD

THIS dissertation was written in 1916, before the entrance of the United States into The War, and was presented to the Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Its publication at this time needs no apology, for it will find its only public in the circumscribed circle of professional scholars. They at least will understand that scholarship knows no nationality. But in the fear that this may fall under the eye of that larger public, whose interests are, properly enough, not scholastic, a word of explanation may prove a safeguard.

The Germans have long been recognized as the hewers of wood and drawers of water of the intellectual world. For the results of the drudgery of minute research and laborious compilation, the scholar must perforce seek German sources. The copious citation of German authorities in this work is, then, the outcome of that necessity. I have, however, given due credit to German criticism, when it is sound. The French are, generically, vastly superior in the art of finely balanced critical estimation.

My sincere thanks are due in particular to the Harrison Foundation of the University for the many advantages I have received therefrom, to Professors John C. Rolfe and Walton B. McDaniel, who have been both teachers and friends to me, and to my good comrades and colleagues, Francis H. Lee and Horace T. Boileau, for their aid in editing this essay.

WILTON WALLACE BLANCKÉ.

1918.





## PART I

### *A RÉSUMÉ OF THE CRITICISM AND OF THE EVIDENCE RELATING TO THE ACTING OF PLAUTUS*

#### INTRODUCTION

THIS investigation was prompted by the abiding conviction that Plautus as a dramatic artist has been from time immemorial misunderstood. In his progress through the ages he has been like a merry clown rollicking amongst people with a hearty invitation to laughter, and has been rewarded by commendation for his services to morality and condemnation for his buffoonery. The majority of Plautine critics have evinced too serious an attitude of mind in dealing with a comic poet. However portentous and profound his scholarship, no one deficient in a sense of humor should venture to approach a comic poet in a spirit of criticism. For criticism means appreciation.

Furthermore, the various estimates of our poet's worth have been as diversified as they have been in the main unfair. Alternately lauded as a master dramatic craftsman and vilified as a scurrilous purveyor of unsavory humor, he has been buffeted from the top to the bottom of the dramatic scale. More recent writers have been approaching a saner evaluation of his true worth, but never, we believe, has his real position in that dramatic scale been definitely and finally fixed; because heretofore no attempt has been made at a complete analysis of his dramatic, particularly his comic, methods. It is the aim of the present dissertation to accomplish this.

I doubt not that from the inception of our acquaintance with the pages of Plautus we have all passed through a similar experience. In the beginning we have been vastly diverted by the quips and cranks and merry wiles of the knavish slave, the complaints of love-lorn youth, the impotent rage of the baffled pander, the fruitless growlings of the hungry parasite's belly. We have been amused, perhaps astonished, on further reading, at meeting our new-found friends in other plays, clothed in different names to be sure and supplied in part with a fresh stock of jests, but still engaged in the frustration of villainous panders, the cheating of harsh fathers, until all ends with virtue triumphant in the estab-

lishment of the undoubted respectability of a hitherto somewhat dubious female character.<sup>1</sup>

Our astonishment waxes as we observe further the close correspondence of dialogue, situation and dramatic machinery. We are bewildered by the innumerable asides of hidden eavesdroppers, the inevitable recurrence of soliloquy and speech familiarly directed at the audience, while every once in so often a slave, desperately bent on finding someone actually under his nose, careens wildly cross the stage or rouses the echoes by unmerciful battering of doors, meanwhile unburdening himself of lengthy solo tirades with great gusto;<sup>2</sup> and all this dished up with a sauce of humor often too racy and piquant for our delicate twentieth-century palate, which has acquired a refined taste for suggestive innuendo, but never relishes calling a spade by its own name.

If we have sought an explanation of our poet's gentle foibles in the commentaries to our college texts, we have assuredly been disappointed. Even to the seminarian in Plautus little satisfaction has been vouchsafed. We are often greeted by the enthusiastic comments of German critics, which run riot in elaborate analyses of plot and character and inform us that we are reading *Meisterwerke* of comic drama.<sup>3</sup> Our perplexity has perhaps become focused upon two leading questions; first: "What manner of drama is this after all? Is it comedy, farce, opera bouffe or mere extravaganza?" Second: "How was it done? What was the technique of acting employed to represent in particular the peculiarly extravagant scenes?"<sup>4</sup>

There is an interesting contrast between the published editions of Plautus and Bernard Shaw. Shaw's plays we find interlaced with an elaborate network of stage direction that enables us to visualize the movements of the characters even to extreme minutiae. In the text of Plautus we find nothing but the dialogue, and in the college editions only such editorially-inserted "stage-business" as is fairly evident from the spoken lines. The answer

<sup>1</sup>E.g., Casina in the *Cas.*, Silenium in the *Cis.*, Planesium in the *Cur.*, Adelphasium and Anterastylis in the *Poen.*, Palaestra in the *Rud.*

<sup>2</sup>V. infra, part II, sec. I. B. 1.

<sup>3</sup>E.g., Lorenz's Introd. to *Most.* and *Pseud.* V. infra, part I, § 1.

<sup>4</sup>We are not concerned in this question with technical discussion as to the position of the banquet table on the stage, the nature of the dog of the *Most.* and the like, but with the delivery and movements of the actors themselves.

then to our second question: "How was it done?", at least does not lie on the surface of the text.

For an adequate answer to both our questions the following elements are necessary; first: a digest of Plautine criticism; second: a résumé of the evidence as to original performances of the plays, including a consideration of the audience, the actors and of the gestures and stage-business employed by the latter; third: a critical analysis of the plays themselves, with a view to cataloguing Plautus' dramatic methods. We hope by these means to obtain a conclusive reply to both our leading questions.

### § I. CRITICS OF PLAUTUS

Plautine criticism has displayed many different angles. As in most things, time helps resolve the discrepancies. The general impression gleaned from a survey of the field is that in earlier times over-appreciation was the rule, which has gradually simmered down, with occasional outpourings of denunciation, to a healthier norm of estimation.

- Even in antiquity the wiseacres took our royal buffoon too seriously. Stylistically he was translated to the  
CICERO skies. Cicero<sup>5</sup> imputes to him "iocandi genus,  
... elegans, urbanum, ingeniosum, facetum."  
Quintilian<sup>6</sup> quotes: "Licet Varro Musas Aelii Stilonis sententia  
Plautino dicat sermone locuturas fuisse, si latine  
AELIUS STILO loqui vellent." The paean is further swelled  
by Gellius, who variously refers to our hero  
as "homo linguae atque elegantiae in verbis Latinae princeps,"<sup>7</sup>  
and "verborum Latinorum elegantissimus,"<sup>8</sup> and  
GELLIUS "linguae Latinae decus."<sup>9</sup> If our poet is scored  
by Horace<sup>10</sup> it is probably due rather to Horace's  
affectation of contempt for the early poets than to his true  
convictions; or we may ascribe it to the sophisti-  
cated metrist's failure to realize the existence  
HORACE of a "Metrica Musa Pedestris." As Duff says

<sup>5</sup>De Off. I. 29.104.

<sup>6</sup>X. 1.99. Cf. Ritschl's citations of Varro: *Parerga*, p. 71 ff. Cf. Epig. quoted by Varro and attributed to Plautus himself, ap. Gel. N. A., I. 24.1-3. But that this was a patent literary forgery is proved by Gudeman in TAPA. XXV, p. 160.

<sup>7</sup>N. A., VI. 17.4.

<sup>8</sup>I. 7.17.

<sup>9</sup>XIX. 8.6.

<sup>10</sup>A. P., 270 ff. Cf. Ep. II. 1.170 ff. and Fay, ed. *Most.*, Intro. § 2.

(*A Literary History of Rome*, p. 197), "The scansion of Plautus was less understood in Cicero's day than that of Chaucer was in Johnson's." (Cf. *Cic. Or.* 55. 184.)

We have somewhat of a reaction, too, against the earlier chorus of praise in the commentary of Euanthius,<sup>11</sup> who EUANTHIUS condemns Plautus' persistent use of direct address of the audience. If it is true, as Donatus<sup>12</sup> says later: "Comoediam esse Cicero ait imitationem vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imaginem veritatis," we find it hard to understand Cicero's enthusiastic praise of Plautus, as we hope to show that he is very far from measuring up to any such comic ideal as that laid down by Cicero himself.

But of course these ancient critiques have no appreciable bearing on our argument and we cite them rather for historical FESTUS interest and retrospect.<sup>13</sup> While Festus<sup>14</sup> makes a painful effort to explain the location of the mythical "Portus Persicus" mentioned in the *Amph.*,<sup>15</sup> Brix<sup>16</sup> in modern times shows that there is no historical ground for BRIX the elaborate mythical genealogy in *Men.* 409 ff. We contend that "Portus Persicus" is pure fiction, as our novelists refer fondly to "Zenda" or "Graustark," while the *Men.* passage is a patent burlesque of the tragic style.<sup>17</sup>

On the threshold of what we may term modern criticism of Plautus we find W. A. Becker, in 1837, writing a BECKER book: "De Comicis Romanorum Fabulis Maxime Plautinis Quaestiones." Herein, after deploring the neglect of Plautine criticism among his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, he attempts to prove that Plautus was a great "original" poet and dramatic artist. Surely no one today can be in sympathy with such a sentiment as the following (Becker, p. 95): "Et Trinumnum, quae ita amabilibus lepidisque personis optimisque exemplis abundat, ut quoties eam lego, non comici me poetae, sed philosophi Socratici opus legere mihi videar." I believe we

<sup>11</sup>*De Com.* III. 6, Donatus ed. Wessner. For full quotation, v. infra, Part II, Sec. II. A. 3, Note 50.

<sup>12</sup>*Excerpta de Com.* V. 1.

<sup>13</sup>For a complete list, see *Testimonia* prefixed to Goetz and Schoell's ed. of Plautus.

<sup>14</sup>P. 217 M.

<sup>15</sup>404, 412, 823.

<sup>16</sup>Ed. *Men.* (Leipzig, 1891), ad 410.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. opening lines of Eurip. *Iph. in Taur.*

may safely call the *Trinummus* the least Plautine of Plautine plays, except the *Captivi*, and it is by no means so good a work. The *Trinummus* is crowded with interminable padded dialogue, tiresome moral preachments, and possesses a weakly motivated plot; a veritable "Sunday-school play."

But Becker continues: "Sive enim <Plautus> seria agit et praecepta pleno effundit penu, ad quae componere vitam oporteat; in sentiis quanta gravitas, orationis quanta vis, quam probe et meditate eum hominum ingenia moresque novisse omnia testantur." We feel sure that our Umbrian fun-maker would strut in public and laugh in private, could he hear such an encomium of his lofty moral aims. For it is our ultimate purpose to prove that fun-maker Plautus was—primarily and well-nigh exclusively a fun-maker.

K. H. Weise, in "Die Komödien des Plautus, kritisch nach Inhalt und Form beleuchtet, zur Bestimmung des Echten und Unechten in den einzelnen Dichtungen" (Quedlinburg, 1866), follows hard on Becker's heels and places Plautus on a pinnacle of poetic achievement in which we scarcely recognize our apotheosized laugh-maker. Every passage in the plays that is not artistically immaculate, that does not conform to the uttermost canons of dramatic art, is unequivocally damned as "unecht." In his Introduction (p. 4) Weise is truly eloquent in painting the times and significance of our poet. With momentary insight he says: "Man hat an ihm eine immer frische und nie versiegende Fundgrube des ächten Volkswitzes." But this is soon marred by utterances such as (p. 14): "Fände sich also in der Zahl der Plautinischen Komödien eine Partie, die mit einer andern in diesen Hinsichten in bedeutendem Grade contrastirte, so könnte man sicher schliessen, dass beide nicht von demselben Verfasser sein könnten." He demands from Plautus, as *ein wahrer Poet*, "Congruenz, und richtige innere Logik <und> harmonische Construction" (p. 12), and finally declares (p. 22): "Interesse, Character, logischer Bau in der Zusammensetzung, Natürlichkeit der Sprache und des Witzes, Rythmus und antikes Idiom des Ausdrucks werden die Kriterien sein müssen, nach dem wir über die Vortrefflichkeit und Plautinität plautinischer Stücke zu entscheiden haben."

On this basis he ruthlessly carves out and discards as "unecht" every passage that fails to conform to his amazing and extravagant

ideals, in the belief that "der ächte Meister Plautus konnte nur Harmonisches, nur Vernünftiges, nur Logisches, nur relativ Richtiges dichten" (p. 79), though even Homer nods. The *Mercator* is banned *in toto*. To be sure, Weise somewhat redeems himself by the statement (p. 29 f.): "Plautus bezweckte . . . lediglich nur die eigentliche und wirksamste Belustigung des Publicums." But how he reconciles this with his previously quoted convictions and with the declaration (p. 16): "Plautus ist ein sehr religiöser, sehr moralischer Schriftsteller," it is impossible to grasp, until we recall that the author is a German.

Such criticism stultifies itself and needs no refutation; certainly not here, as P. Langen in his *Plautinische Studien* (Berliner Studien, 1886; pp. 90-91) has conclusively proved that the inconsistent is a feature absolutely germane to Plautine style, and has collected an overwhelming mass of "Widersprüche, Inkonssequenzen und psychologische Unwahrscheinlichkeiten" that would question the "Plautinity" of every other line, were we to follow Weise's precepts. Langen too uses the knife, but with a certain judicious restraint.

We insist that the attempt to explain away every inconsistency as spurious is a sorry refuge.

Langrehr in *Miscellanea Philologica* (Göttingen, 1876), under the caption *Plautina*<sup>18</sup> gives vent to further solemn LANGREHR Teutonic carplings at the plot of the *Epidicus* and argues the play a *contaminatio* on the basis of the double intrigue. He is much exercised too over the mysterious episode of 'the disappearing flute-girl.'

Langen, who is in the main remarkably sane, refutes these conclusions neatly.<sup>19</sup> How Weise and his confrères argue Plautus such a super-poet, in view of the life and education of the public to whom he catered, let alone the evidence of the plays themselves, and their author's status as mere translator and adapter, must remain an insoluble mystery. The simple truth is that a playwright such as Plautus, having undertaken to feed a populace hungry for amusement, ground out plays (doubtless for a living),<sup>20</sup> with a wholesome disregard for niceties of composition, provided only he obtained his *sine qua non*—the laugh.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Pp. 13-19. V. Langen, *Plautinische Studien*, pp. 139-142. Cf. also comments of Brix to *Menaechmi* passim. <sup>19</sup>Op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. Gel. N. A., III. 3.14 ff. <sup>21</sup>V. infra, Part II, under 'Careless Composition'.

In our citation of opinions we must not overlook that impressive mile-stone in the history of criticism, the discredited but still great Lessing. In his "Abhandlung von dem Leben und den Werken des M. Accius Plautus" Lessing deprecates the harsh judgment of Horace and later detractors of our poet in modern times. Lessing idealizes him as the matchless comic poet. That the *Captivi* is "das vortrefflichste Stück, welches jemals auf den Schauplatz gekommen ist," as Lessing declares in the Preface to his translation of the play, is an utterance that leaves us gasping.

But Lessing's idea of the purpose of comedy is a combination of Aristotelian and mid-Victorian ideals: "die Sitten der Zuschauer zu bilden und zu bessern, . . . wenn sie nämlich das Laster allezeit unglücklich und die Tugend am Ende glücklich sein lässt."<sup>22</sup> It is on the basis of this premise that he awards the comic crown to the *Cap.*<sup>23</sup> His extravagant encomium called forth from a contemporary a long controversial letter which Lessing published in the second edition with a reply so feeble that he distinctly leaves his adversary the honors of the field.

How much better the diagnosis of Madame Dacier, who is quoted by Lessing! In the introduction to her translations of the *Amphitruo*, *Rudens* and *Epidicus* (issued in 1683), she apologizes for Plautus on the ground that he had to win approval for his comedies from an audience used to the ribaldry of the *Saturae*.

Lorenz in his introductions to editions of the *Most.* and *Pseud.* is another who seems to be carried away by the unrestrained enthusiasm that often affects scholars oversteeped in the lore of their author. Faults are dismissed as merely "Kleine Unwahrscheinlichkeiten" (Introd. *Ps.*, p. 26, N. 25.) "Jeder Leser," says he, "<wird gewiss> darin beistimmen, dass . . . der erste Act <des *Pseudolus*> eine so gelungene Exposition darbietet, wie sie die dramatische Poesie nur aufweisen kann." Such a statement must fall, by weight of exaggeration. In appreciation of the portrayal of the name-part he continues: "Mit welch' überwältigender Herrschaft tritt hier gleich die meisterhaft geschilderte Hauptperson hervor! Welche packende Kraft, welche hinreissende *verve* liegt in dem reichen Dialoge, der wie beseelt von der feurigen Energie des begabten

<sup>22</sup>Beschluss der Kritik über die Gefangenen des Plautus.

<sup>23</sup>Op. cit., fin.



Menschen, der ihn lenkt, fröhlich rauschend dahin eilt, übersprudelnd von einer Fülle erheiternder Scherze und schillernder Spielereien!"

In curious contrast to this fulsome outpouring stands the expressed belief of Lamarre<sup>24</sup> that the character of Ballio overshadows that of Pseudolus. In support of this view he cites Cicero (*Pro Ros. Com.* 7.20), who mentions that Roscius chose to play Ballio.

Lorenz in his enthusiasm exalts the *Epid.* to an ideal of comic excellence (Introd. *Ps.* p. 27). He even goes so far as to contend that Plautus lives up to the following characterization:<sup>25</sup> "Nicht bloß durch naturgetreue und lebhaftes Charakterschilderungen und durch eine komisch gehaltene, aber die Grenzen des Wahrscheinlichen und des Graziösen nicht überschreitende Zeichnung des täglichen Lebens soll der Dichter des Lustspiels seine Zuschauer interessiren und ihr heiteres Gelächter hervorrufen, sondern auch so reiche Anwendung zu geben, durch die es in den Dienst einer sittlichen Idee tritt, und so gleichsam die moralische Atmosphäre . . . zu reinigen."

Such emotional superlatives merely create in the reader a cachinnatory revulsion. Yes, Plautus was great, but he was great in a far different way. He approached the Rabelaisian. It is doubtful if "die Grenzen des Graziösen" lay within his purview at all.

The treatment of Lamarre cited above contains<sup>26</sup> a highly meritorious analysis of the Plautine characters, discussed largely as a reflection of the times and people, both of New  
LAMARRE Comedy and of Plautus, without imputing to our poet too serious motives of subtle portrayal. But he too ascribes to Plautus a latent moral purpose: "En faisant rire, il veut corriger"<sup>27</sup>

This sounds ominously like an echo from Naudet<sup>28</sup> who, in the course of lauding Plautus' infinite invention and variety of  
NAUDET embroidery, would translate him into a zealous social reformer by saying: "L'auteur se proposait de faire beaucoup rire les spectateurs, mais il voulait aussi qu'ils se cor-

<sup>24</sup>*La littérature latine depuis la fondation de Rome* (Paris, 1899), Bk. II. chap. 3. sec. 15, p. 362.

<sup>25</sup>Introd. to ed. *Most.*, p. 37.

<sup>26</sup>Bk. II, Ch. 4.

<sup>27</sup>Lamarre, op. cit., Bk. II, Ch. 4, Sec. 12, p. 475.

<sup>28</sup>*Théâtre de Plaute* (Paris, 1845), Introd. p. 18.

rigeassent en riant." All this is disappointing. We should have expected Gallic esprit to rise superior to such banality.

The celebrity of French criticism is somewhat redeemed by LeGrand in his monumental work entitled *Daos*.  
LEGRAND *Tableau de la comédie grecque pendant la période dite nouvelle* (Annales de l'Université de Lyon, 1910), in the conclusion to the chapter on 'Intentions didactiques et valeur morale' (Part III, Chap. I, page 583): "Tout compte fait, au point de vue moral, la *véa* dut être inoffensive (en son temps)." This is the culmination of a calm, dispassionate discussion and analysis of the extant remains of New Comedy and *Palliatæ*.

Even Ritschl fails to escape the taint of degrading Plautus to the status of a petty moralizer.<sup>29</sup> In particular, he lauds the *Aul.* unreservedly as a *chef d'oeuvre* of character delineation and pronounces it immeasurably superior to Molière's imitation, "L'Avare."<sup>30</sup> This whole critique, while interesting, falls into the prevailing trend of imputing to Plautus far too high a plane of dramatic artistry.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, Langen has already scored Ritschl on this very point in remarking<sup>32</sup> that Ritschl's condemnation of an alleged defect in the *Cas.*<sup>33</sup> implies much too favorable an estimate of Plautus' artistic worth, as the defects cited are represented as something isolated and remarkable, whereas they are characteristic of Plautine comedy. Langen still displays clear-headed judgment when he says of the *Miles*<sup>34</sup>: "Wenn die Farben so stark aufgetragen werden, hört jede Feinheit der Charakterzeichnung auf und bei einem Dichter, der sich dies gestattet, darf man bezüglich der Charakterschilderungen nicht zu viele Ansprüche machen. Es ist sehr wahrscheinlich, dass Plautus mit Rücksicht auf den Geschmack seines Publikums die Züge des Originals sehr vergrößert hat."

But Langen fails to follow this splendid lead. Without taking advantage of the license that he himself offers the poet, he severely

<sup>29</sup>*Opuscula Philologica*, Vol. II. p. 743.

<sup>30</sup>*Opusc.* II. 733 ff.

<sup>31</sup>In *Opusc.* III. 455, Ritschl relates that Varro wrote six books on drama, with Plautus as the especial object of his interest: *de originibus scaenicis, de scaenicis actionibus, de actibus scaenicis, de personis, de descriptionibus, quaestiones Plautinae*.

<sup>32</sup>Langen, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>33</sup>*Opusc.* II. 746.

<sup>34</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 165.

condemns<sup>35</sup>, the scene in which Periplecomenus shouts out to Philocomasium so loudly that the soldier's household could not conceivably help hearing, whereas he is supposed to be conveying secret information.<sup>36</sup> If carried out in a broadly farcical spirit, the scene becomes potentially amusing.

Mommsen in his *History*<sup>37</sup>, in the course of an interesting discussion on *palliatae* and their Greek originals, has a far saner point of view. He says of the authors of New Comedy:<sup>37</sup> "They wrote not like Eupolis and Aristophanes for a great nation; but rather for a cultivated society which spent its time . . . in guessing riddles and playing at charades. . . . Even in the dim Latin copy, through which we chiefly know it, the grace of the original is not wholly obliterated. <In *palliatae*> persons and incidents seem capriciously or carelessly shuffled as in a game of cards; in the original a picture from life, it became in the reproduction a caricature."

Naturally we are not concerned with any consideration of the value of his estimate of New Comedy. Assuredly he rates it too highly, as later investigations have indicated.<sup>38</sup> But here for the first time we are able to quote a well-balanced appreciation of some essential features of Plautine drama: a "capricious shuffling of incidents" and "caricature." In fact it will be our endeavor to show that the *palliata* was not a true art form, but merely an outer shell or mold into which Plautus poured his stock of witticisms.

Still more trenchant is the conclusion of Körting in his *Geschichte des griechischen und römischen Theaters* (P. 218 ff.): "Die neue attische Komödie und folglich auch ihr Abklatsch, KÖRTING die römische Palliata, war nicht ein Lustspiel im höchsten, im sittlichen Sinne des Wortes, sondern ein blosses Unterhaltungsdrama. Amüsieren wollten die Komödiendichter, nichts weiter. Jedes höhere Streben lag ihnen fern. Wohl spickten sie ihre Lustspiele mit moralischen Sentenzen. . . . Aber die schönen Sentenzen sind eben nur Zierat, sind nur Verbrämung einer in ihrem Kerne und Wesen durch und durch unsittlichen Dichtung . . . Mit der Wahrscheinlichkeit der Handlung wird es sehr leicht genommen: die seltsamsten Zufälle

<sup>35</sup>Op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>36</sup>*Mil.* 522 ff. (All citations from Plautus are based on the text and numbering of the lines in the text of Goetz and Schoell).

<sup>37</sup>*History of Rome*, (Transl. Dickson, Scribner, N. Y., 1900), Vol. III, p. 143.

<sup>38</sup>E.g., LeGrand, *Daos*, V. supra. Cf. also N. 80, Part II.

werden als so ziemlich selbstverständliche Möglichkeiten hingestellt. . . . Es ginge das noch an, wenn wir in eine phantastische Märchenwelt geführt werden, in welcher am Ende auch das Wunderbarste möglich ist, aber nein! es wird uns zugemutet, überzeugt zu sein, dass alles mit natürlichen Dingen zugehe.

"Alles in allem genommen, ist an dieser Komödie, abgesehen von ihrer formal musterhaften Technik, herzlich wenig zu bewundern. . . . An Zweideutigkeiten, Obscönitäten, Schimpfscenen ist Überfluss vorhanden."

With admirable clarity of vision, Körting has spied the vital spot and illuminated it with the word "Unterhaltungs-drama." That amusement was the sole aim of the comic poets we firmly believe. But if this was so, why arraign them on the charge of trying to convince us that everything is happening in a perfectly natural manner? The outer form to be sure is that of everyday life, but this is no proof that the poets demanded of their audiences a belief in the verisimilitude of the events depicted. Can we have no fantastic fairyland without some outlandish accompaniment such as a chorus garbed as birds or frogs? But we reserve fuller discussion of this point until later. We might suggest an interesting comparison to the nonsense verse of W. S. Gilbert, which represents the most shocking ideas in a style even nonchalantly matter-of-fact. Does Gilbert by any chance actually wish us to believe that "Gentle Alice Brown," in the poem of the same name, really assisted in "cutting up a little lad"?

Körting regains his usual clear-headedness in pronouncing 'that there is little in the technique of *palliatae* to excite our admiration.' Again we insist (to borrow the jargon of the modern dramatic critic) it was but a "vehicle" for popular amusement.

Wilhelm Schlegel, in his *History of the Drama*,<sup>39</sup> has the point of view of the dramatic critic, rather than the professional scholar; while expressing a measure of admiration for the significance of Plautus in literature, he is impelled to say: "The bold, coarse style of Plautus and his famous jokes, savour of his familiarity with the vulgar . . . <He> mostly inclines to the farcical, to overwrought and often disgusting drollery." This is doubtless true, but, by making the incidental a criterion for the whole, it gives a gross misconception to one that has not read Plautus.

<sup>39</sup>P. 190, trans. John Black (London, 1846), Lecture XIV.

J. W. Donaldson, in his lectures on the Greek theatre,<sup>40</sup> has plagiarized Schlegel practically *verbatim*, while giving the scantest credit to his source. His work thus loses value, as DONALDSON being a mere echo, or compilation of second-hand material.

We learn from Schlegel that Goethe was so enamored of ancient comedy that he enthusiastically superintended the translation and production of plays of Plautus and Terence. Says Schlegel:<sup>41</sup> "I once witnessed at Weimar a representation of the *Adelphi* of Terence, entirely in ancient costume, which, under the direction of Goethe, furnished us a truly Attic evening."

In this connection the opinion of Sir Walter Scott may be interesting. He too, not being a classical scholar *par excellence*, may be better equipped for sound judgment. In SCOTT the introduction to Dryden's *Amphitryon* he says:

"Plautus . . . left us a play on the subject of Amphitryon which has *had the honour* to be deemed worthy of imitation by Molière and Dryden. It cannot be expected that the plain, blunt and inartificial style of so rude an age should bear any comparison with that of the authors who enjoyed the highest advantages of the polished times to which they were an ornament." There speaks the sophisticated and conscious literary technician!<sup>42</sup>

The most comprehensive and judicious estimate of all is certainly attained by LeGrand in *Daos*.<sup>43</sup> He appreciates clearly that "la nouvelle comédie n' a pas été, en toute circonstance, une comédie distinguée. Elle n' a pas dédaigné constamment la farce et le gros rire."<sup>44</sup> How much more then would this apply to *palliatae*!

We now believe that we have on hand a sufficiently large volume of criticism to appreciate practically every phase of judgment to which Plautus has been subjected.<sup>45</sup> The ancients overrated him stylistically, but he was a man of their own people. Men such as Becker, Weise, Lorenz and Langrehr have proceeded upon a dis-

<sup>40</sup>Theatre of the Greeks, p. 443.

<sup>41</sup>P. 197.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. Ritschl's opinion, Note 30.

<sup>43</sup>V. supra.

<sup>44</sup>P. 620. But cf. Note 37.

<sup>45</sup>Cf. further Plessis, *La poésie latine* (Paris, 1909), p. 54 ff.; Patin, *Études sur la poésie latine* (Paris, 1869), Vol. II, p. 224 ff.; Ribbeck, *Geschichte der römischen Dichtung* (Stuttgart, 1894), Vol. I, p. 57 ff.; Tyrrell, *Early Latin Poetry*, p. 44 ff. A very excellent discussion is contained in Duff, *A Literary History of Rome* (N. Y., 1909), p. 183 ff.

tinctly exaggerated ideal of Plautus' eminence as a master dramatic craftsman and literary artist and therefore have amputated with the cry of "Spurious!" everything that offends their ideal. Lessing is obsessed with too high an estimate of the *Captivi*. Lamarre, Naudet and Ritschl commit the error of imputing to our poet a moral purpose. Schlegel and Scott deprecate the crudity of his wit without an adequate appreciation of its sturdy and primeval robustness. Langen, Mommsen, Körting and LeGrand approach a keen estimate of his inconsistencies and his single-minded purpose of entertainment, but Körting accuses him of attempting to create an illusion of life while aiming solely at provoking laughter.

From this heterogeneous mass of diversified criticism we glean the prevailing idea that Plautus is lauded or condemned according to his conformity or non-conformity to some preconceived standard of comedy situate in the critic's mind, without a consideration of the poet's original purpose. We must seriously propound the question as to how far a grave injustice has been done him almost universally in criticising him for what he does not pretend to be. Did Plautus himself suffer from any illusion that his plays were constructed with cogent and consummate technique? Did he for a single instant imagine himself the inspired reformer of public morality? Did he believe that his style was elegant and polished? Indeed, he must have effected an appreciable refinement of the vernacular of his age to produce his lively verse, but without losing the robust vitality of "Volkswitz." Or is it true that nothing further than amusement lay within his scope?

If so, we may at least posit that almost unbounded license must be allowed the pen which aims simply to raise a laugh. We do not fulminate against a treatise on Quaternions because it lacks humor. If the drawings of cartoonists are anatomically incorrect, we are smilingly indulgent. Do we condemn a vaudeville skit for not conforming to the Aristotelian code of dramatic technique? Assuredly we do not rise in disgust from a musical comedy because "in real life" a bevy of shapely maidens in scant attire never goes tripping and singing blithely through the streets. If then we can establish that Plautus regarded his adapted dramas merely as a rack on which to hang witticisms, merely as a medium for laugh-provoking sallies and situations, we have at once Plautus as he pretended to be, and in large measure the answer to the original question: "What manner of drama is this?"

We say only "in large measure," because it is part of our endeavor to settle accurately the position of our author in the dramatic scale, considered of necessity from the modern viewpoint. We cannot believe that he had any pretensions to refined art in play building, or rather rebuilding, or to any superficial elegance of style, or to any moralizing pose. We believe him an entertainer pure and simple, who never restricted himself in his means except by the outer conventions and form of the Greek New Comedy and the Roman stage, provided his single aim, that of affording amusement; was attained. To establish this belief, and at the same time to interpret accurately the nature of his plays and the means and effect of their production, is our thesis.

If then we run the gamut of the dramatic scale, we observe that as we descend from the higher forms, such as tragedy, psychological drama and "straight comedy," to the lower, such as musical comedy and burlesque, the license allowed playwright and actor increases so radically that we have a difference of kind rather than of degree. Certain conventions of course are common to all types. The "missing fourth side" of the room is a commonplace recognized by all. If we ourselves are never in the habit of communicating the contents of our letters, as we write, to a doubtless appreciative atmosphere, we never cavil at such an act on the stage. The stage whisper and aside, too, we accept with benevolent indulgence; but it is worth noting that in the attempted verisimilitude of the modern "legitimate" drama, the aside has well nigh vanished. As we go down the scale through light comedy and broad farce these conventions multiply rapidly.

With the introduction of music come further absurdities. Melodious voicing of our thoughts is in itself essentially unnatural, to say the least. Grand opera, great art form as it may be, is hopelessly artificial. Indeed, so far is it removed from the plane of every day existence that we are rudely jolted by the introduction of too commonplace a thought, as when Sharpless in the English version of "Madame Butterfly" warbles mellifluously: "High-ball or straight?" And when we reach musical comedy and vaudeville, all thought of drama, technically speaking, is abandoned in watching the capers of the "merry-merry" or the outrageous "Dutch" comedian wielding his deadly newspaper.

It is important for our immediate purposes to note: first, (as aforesaid), that the amount of license allowed author and actor

increases immeasurably as we go down the scale; second, that the degree of familiarity with the audience and cognizance of the spectator's existence varies inversely as the degree of dramatic value. Thus, at one end of the scale we have, for instance, Mrs. Fiske, whose fondness for playing to the centre of the stage and ignoring the audience is commented upon as a mannerism; at the other, the low comedian who says his say or sings his song directly at the audience and converses gaily with them as his boon companions. Now it will be shown that familiar address of the audience and the singing of monodies to musical accompaniment are essential features of Plautus' style, and many other implements of the lower types of modern drama are among his favorite devices. If then we can place Plautus toward the bottom of the scale, we relieve him vastly of responsibility as a dramatist and of the necessity of adherence to verisimilitude. Where does he actually belong? The answer must be sought in a detailed consideration of his methods of producing his effects and in an endeavor to ascertain how far the audience and the acting contributed to them.

## § 2. THE PERFORMANCE

As it is perfectly patent that every practical playwright must cater to his public, the audience is an essential feature in our discussion. The audience of Plautus was not of a high class. Terence, even in later times, when education had materially progressed, often failed to reach them by over-finesse. Plautus with his bold brush pleased them. Surely a turbulent and motley throng they were, with the native violence of the sun-warmed Italic temperament and the abundant animal spirits of a crude civilization, tumbling into the theatre in the full enjoyment of holiday, scrambling for vantage points on the sloping ground, if such were handy, or a good spot for their camp-stools. In view of the uncertainty as to the actual site of the original performances, this portraiture is "atmospheric" rather than "photographic." (See Saunders in TAPA. XLIV, 1913). At any rate, we have ample evidence of the turbulence of the early Roman audience. (Ter. Prol. *Hec.* 39-42, and citations immediately following). Note the description of Mommsen:<sup>46</sup> "The audience was anything but genteel. . . . The body of spectators cannot have differed much from what one sees in the

<sup>46</sup>*History of Rome*, Vol. III, p. 139. Cf. note 37.



present day at public fireworks and gratis exhibitions. Naturally, therefore, the proceedings were not too orderly; children cried,<sup>47</sup> women talked and shrieked, now and then a wench prepared to push her way to the stage; the ushers had on these festivals anything but a holiday, and found frequent occasion to confiscate a mantle or to ply the rod.<sup>48</sup>

Impatient if the play be delayed, and voicing their disapproval by lusty clapping, stamping, whistling and cat-calls, they are equally ready with noisy approval if the dramatic fare tickle their palate.<sup>49</sup> The *tibicen*, as he steps forth to render the overture, is greeted uproariously as an old favorite. The manager perhaps appears and announces the names of those taking part, each one of whom is doubtless applauded or hissed in proportion to his measure of popularity. Differences of opinion as to the merits of an individual actor may culminate in the partisans' coming to blows.<sup>50</sup> Horace (*Ep.* II. 1.200 ff.) comments on the turbulence of the audiences of his day too; while under the Empire factions for and against particular actors grew up, as in the circus.<sup>51</sup> Late-comers of course often disturbed the Prologus in his lines. The continual reiteration that we find in such prologues as the *Amph.*, *Cap.* and *Poen.* was naturally designed as a safeguard against such disturbance. Yet these prologues were undoubtedly composed, as Ritschl has shown (*Par.* 232 ff.), shortly after 146 B. C., and the turbulence of the original audience must have been far greater.

To win the favor of such a crowd, which would groan if instead of the expected comedy a tragedy should be announced,<sup>52</sup> what methods were necessary? Slap-sticks, horse-play, broad slashing swashbuckling humor, thick colors daubed on with lavish brush!

By Cicero's time the public had attained to such a degree of sophistication that the slightest slip on the part of the wretched actor was greeted by a storm of popular disapproval. "Histrio si

<sup>47</sup>Cf. *Prol. Poen.* 28-9.

<sup>48</sup>*Prol. Poen.*, 11 ff.

<sup>49</sup>*Plaudere*, πάλιν, *sibilare* or *exsibilare*, *explodere*, *ei cere* were expressions used to indicate approval or disapproval. Cf. the discussion of Oehmichen, article *Bühnenwesen* in Von Müller's *Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 5ter Band, 3te Abteilung, § 73. 2, p. 271.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. *Prol. Poen.* 36 ff.

<sup>51</sup>Cf. *Tac. Ann.* 1.77. V. Oehmichen, op. cit., § 39.3, p. 220.

<sup>52</sup>V. *Prol. Amph.* 52-3:

Quid contraxistis frontem? Quia tragoediam  
Dixi futuram hanc?

paulum se movit extra numerum, aut si versus pronuntiatus est syllaba una brevior aut longior, exsibilatur, exploditur," says Cicero.<sup>53</sup> The actor dare not even have a cold, for on the slightest manifestation of hoarseness, he was hooted off, though favorites such as Roscius might be excused on the plea of indisposition.<sup>54</sup> The Scholiast Cruquius to Hor. *Ser.* I. 10.37 ff. notes: "Poëmata . . . in theatris exhibita imperitae multitudinis applausum captare."

It is evident from all this that, while the Roman public had made considerable advances in education, their demonstrative temperament had not cooled. It seems eminently fair to deduce that the far ruder and less cultivated audiences of Plautus' day were even more violent in their manifestations of pleasure and displeasure, but that their criterion of taste was solely the amount of amusement derived from the performance<sup>52</sup> and that they bothered themselves little about niceties of rhythm. To the Roman, the scenic and histrionic were the vital features of a production. Again we reiterate, only the bold brush could have pleased them.

That the plays of Plautus attained a permanent position in the theatrical repertoire of Rome is of course well known; but he wrote primarily for his own age, and in a difficult environment. Not only did he have to please a highly volatile and inflammable public, but he must have been forced to exercise tact to avoid offending the patrician powers, as the imprisonment of Naevius indicates. Mommsen has an apt summary:<sup>55</sup> "Under such circumstances, where art worked for daily wages and the artist instead of receiving due honour was subjected to disgrace, the new national theatre of the Romans could not present any development either original or even at all artistic."

This brief discussion of the relation between public and playwright will suffice for our purposes. In the course of it we have insensibly encroached upon the next topic: the relation of public and actor. Who after all is the chief factor in the success or failure of a drama, in spite of the oft misquoted adage, "The play's the thing?" The actor! The actor, who can mouth and tear a passion to tatters,

<sup>53</sup>*Parad.* III. 2.26. Cf. *Or.* 51.173, *de Or.* III. 50.196: "*theatra tota reclamant*"; Hor. *Ep.* II. 1.200 ff.; Suet. *Nero*, 24.1.

<sup>54</sup>*Cic. de Or.* I.61.259, I. 27.124.

<sup>55</sup>*Hist. Rome*, ed. cit., Vol. III, p. 140.

or swing a piece of trumpery into popular favor by the brute force of his dash and personality. That this was true in Plautus' day, no less than in our own, is plainly indicated by the personal allusion inserted in the *Bac.* (214-5):

Etiam Epidicum, quam ego fabulam aequae ac me ipsum amo,  
Nullam aequae invitus specto, *si agit Pellio.*

The servile status of the ancient actor is an index to the energy of his performance, if to nothing else. Failure meant a beating, success a drink at least.<sup>56</sup> Augustus humanely abrogated the whipping of actors, but an attempt was made in Tiberius' time to renew the practice.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, there seem to have been prizes awarded to successful actors,<sup>58</sup> as well as to the poet,<sup>59</sup> but this practice surely arose after Plautus' lifetime. At any rate, whatever was the nature of the reward, in his day the large emoluments won by Roscius and other popular favorites were impossible.<sup>60</sup> The effort demanded by the elaborate education of the actor,<sup>61</sup> in which naturally gesticulation was the most vital element, was out of all proportion to the precarious reward. A rigid course of training was prescribed and strenuous exercises were required, for both actor and orator to keep the voice in proper form.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, Quintilian advises the budding orator to take instruction in voice production and gesticulation from the comic actor.<sup>63</sup> For the comic actor was at all times recognized as livelier and more vivid in his performance than the tragedian.<sup>64</sup> The two were usually sharply differentiated.<sup>65</sup> Specialization arose, too, and we hear of actors who confined their efforts to feminine roles,<sup>66</sup> though natur-

<sup>56</sup>*Cist.* 785: Qui deliquit vapulabit, qui non deliquit bibet. Cf. *Trin.* 990. *Amph.* 83-4, (if this is not merely an imitation of the Greek original).

<sup>57</sup>*Tac. Ann.* 1.77.

<sup>58</sup>*Amph.* 65 ff., *Poen.* 36 ff., *Ter. Phor.* 16 ff., *Cic. ad Att.* IV. 15.6, *Hor. Ep.* II. 1.181.

<sup>59</sup>*Cas.* 17 ff., *Trin.* 706 ff. But others argue that these passages are only translations from the Greek. V. Leo in *Hermes*, 1883, p. 561, F. Ostermayer, *De hist. fab. in com. Pl.* (Greifswald, 1884), p. 7. Ritschl (*Parerga*, p. 229) argues that the passages refer to cases of extraordinary public approval, not to formal contests. Cf. *Var. L.L.* V. 178.

<sup>60</sup>*Cic. pro. Ros. Com.* 10.28-9, *Plin. N. H.* 7.39.128, *Dio* 77.21. Cf. *Sen. Ep.* 80.7.

<sup>61</sup>Körting, *op. cit.*, p. 244 ff.

<sup>62</sup>*Cic. de Or.* I.59.251, *Suet. Nero* 20, *Quint.* XI. 3.19.

<sup>63</sup>*I. II. I-2*, *I. II. 12.*

<sup>64</sup>*Quint.* XI. 3. 111.

<sup>65</sup>*Cic. Or.* 31.109.

<sup>66</sup>*Quint.* XI. 3.178, *Juv.* III. 98-9.

ally every performer was cast for parts to which his physique was best suited.<sup>67</sup>

It is doubtful whether such an elaborate system had been developed in Plautus' time, but this much is certain: the comedian was on the stage lively, energetic and constantly spurred on by the fear of punishment from the *dominus gregis* and the violent disapproval of a fickle, tempestuous and withal exacting public. Polybius<sup>68</sup> relates that the visit of a troupe of Greek actors to Rome was a failure because of their over-staid deportment, until, learning the desires of the volatile Italians, they improvised a vastly more vivid pantomime depicting a mock battle, with huge success. Assuredly the early Roman comedian must have acted with greater abandon and clownish drollery, if not with the elaborate histrionic technique of the later actor.<sup>69</sup> We have heard Dr. Charles Knapp relate that the performance of the *Ajax* of Sophocles by a troupe of modern Greek players went with amazing and incredible rapidity and vivacity. It is all of a piece. We must inevitably associate vivid temperament with the sons of the Mediterranean in all ages. Yet we have just seen that the Greeks of old were too self-contained for their Italian brethren.

With this brief discussion of the condition, incentive and motive of the Plautine actor, let us pass on to a more detailed consideration of his methods and technique. Naturally by far the most important part of this was

THE HISTRIONISM gesture. Here again, while some of our evidence is somewhat unreliable, practically every shred of extant testimony indicates an extreme liveliness and vivacity. In the rhetoricians frequent warning is issued to the forensic neophyte to avoid the unrestraint of theatrical gesticulation. Cicero says (*De Or.* I. 59. 251): "Nemo suaserit studiosis dicendi adulescentibus in gestu discendo histrionum more elaborare." Quintilian echoes (I. 11.3): "Ne gestus quidem omnis ac motus a comediis petendus est. . . . Orator plurimum . . . aberit a scaenico, nec vultu nec manu nec excursionibus nimius." And in the

<sup>67</sup>Cic. *de Off.* I. 31.114, *ad Att.* IV. 15.6.

<sup>68</sup>Ap. Athen. XIV. 615 A.

<sup>69</sup>For a full discussion of the ancient actor v. Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, s. v. *histrion*; Friedländer in Marquardt-Mommsen *Handbuch der römischen Altertümer*, VI. p. 508 ff.; J. van Wageningen, *Scaenica Romana*; Warnecke, *Die Vortragskunst der römischen Schauspieler*, in *Neue Jahrbücher*, 1908, p. 704 ff.

*Auctor ad Herennium* we find (III. 15.26): "Convenit igitur in vultu et pudorem nec acrimoniam esse, in gestu et venustatem nec turpitudinem, ne aut histriones aut operarii videamur esse."<sup>70</sup> That the nature and liveliness of gesture on the stage was determined by the character portrayed, it is almost needless to say.<sup>71</sup>

Cicero's analysis (*de Or.* III. 59.220) of the difference between theatrical and forensic gesture implies that the former illustrates individual words and ideas, while the latter comprehends more broadly the general thought and sentiment.<sup>72</sup> It is most unfortunate that we have lost Cicero's treatise *De Gestu Histrionis*.<sup>73</sup>

By Cicero's time a more restrained mode of acting was evidently considered good taste; witness *de Off.* (I. 36. 130): "Histrionum non nulli gestus ineptiis non vacant, . . . et quae sunt recta et simplicia laudantur."<sup>74</sup> But the passages cited above bear ample testimony to the vigor of histrionic gesticulation even at this later and far more cultivated epoch. Again we repeat, what must have been the energy and abandon of the original Plautine actor?<sup>75</sup>

Apart from the rhetoricians, the most fruitful literary source of our information on gesture is Donatus' commentary on Terence. The trustworthiness of this has been the subject of much argument. Sittl<sup>76</sup> accuses him of speaking merely from the standpoint of a professor of rhetoric, as comedies of Terence were no longer given in the time of Donatus. Weinberger, in his "Beiträge zu den Bühnenaltherthümern aus Donats Terenz-commentar,"<sup>77</sup> admonishes us to be very careful not to put too high a value on the commentary. Van Wageningen<sup>78</sup> is of the opinion that much of the work was inspired by Donatus' having seen in his own time

<sup>70</sup>Cf. *de Or.* III. 56.214, III. 22.83, Quint. XI. 3.125, 181-2.

<sup>71</sup>Quint. XI. 3. 112.

<sup>72</sup>Cf. Quint. XI. 3.89.

<sup>73</sup>Cic. *ad Att.* VI. 1.8.

<sup>74</sup>Cf. *de Or.* III. 26.102, Quint. XI. 3.71, 89.

<sup>75</sup>For further treatment of the gestures of orators see Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, s. v. *histrion*; Warnecke in *Neue Jahrbücher*, 1910, p. 593; Sittl, *Die Gebärden der Griechen und Römer*, Chap. XI; Mart. Cap. 43. In the other rhetoricians of the later Empire there is much copying of Cicero and Quintilian, but nothing of significance for our purpose, unless it be the comparison of the rigid training recommended to the embryo orator. For further citations, V. Pauly-Wissowa, *op. cit.*

<sup>76</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>77</sup>*Wiener Studien*, Vol. XIV, p. 120.

<sup>78</sup>*Scaen. Rom.*, p. 52. Cf. Karsten in *Mnem.* XXXII, (1904), pp. 209-251, 287-322, who concludes that at least four hands aided in the commentaries.

unmasked actors play. To this view color is lent by Donatus' note to *And.* 716: "Sive haec <Mysis> personatis viris agitur, ut apud veteres, sive per mulierem, ut nunc videmus."

If this is true, it makes Donatus' work of more significance to us, as it would imply a harking back to the play of feature of the unmasked performances of Plautus' day. But while it is certain that Donatus had other sources than the Terentian text for his annotations,<sup>79</sup> it is equally certain that practically everything he has to say relative to gesture and stage business is readily to be deduced from the text and is in the main interesting only as a compilation.<sup>80</sup> However, everything he says continues to point persistently to lively gesture and action; and this too in Terentian comedy, where the text makes far less rigorous demands on the actor's muscles than in Plautus' works.

Donatus remarks occasionally that certain words must have been accompanied by especially expressive gesture and byplay, evidently of feature, as *vultuose*, *cum gestu* and similar phrases are used to indicate this.<sup>81</sup> His note to *And.* 722 is: "Haec scaena actiosa est: magis enim in gestu quam in oratione est constituta." Of gestures emphatic and yet not foreign to everyday life Quintilian notes (XI. 3. 123): "Femur ferire—et usitatum et indignantis decet"; a movement plainly employed in *Mil.* 204 and *Truc.* 601. But, says Quintilian further (ib.): "Complodere manus scaenicum est et pectus caedere."<sup>82</sup>

One of the notable "hits" of the ancient stage is recorded by Donatus ad *Phor.* 315: Ambivius (as Phormio) entered "oscitans temulenter atque aurem minimo scalpens digitulo . . . et labia lingens ut ebrius et ructans." But Ambivius' potations resulted in an extremely spirited and lifelike imitation of the parasite character and he was forthwith forgiven his drunkenness.

Passing mention must be made of the Terentian Mss. illustrations, though they add but little weight to the foregoing. For a complete list of their sources and editions see Sittl. "Gebärden der

<sup>79</sup>E.g., Donat. ad *And.* 88, *Eun.* 187, 986, *Phor.* 315.

<sup>80</sup>All the passages in Donatus dealing with gesture have been collected by Leo, *Rheinisches Museum* XXXVIII, p. 331 ff.

<sup>81</sup>E.g., Donat. ad *And.* 180, 363, 380-1, *Eun.* 209, 559, 974, *Ad.* 84, 499, 661, 795, 951, *Hec.* 612, 689, *Phor.* 49, 315. Cf. *Ad.* 285: superbe ac magnifice. Cf. Schol. ad *And.* 332: *Vultuose* hoc dicitur, hoc est cum gestu. Cf. also Warnecke in *Neue Jahrbücher*, 1910, note 75.

<sup>82</sup>Cf. XI. 3. 103, *Auct. ad Her.* III. 15.27.

Griechen und Römer," Chap. XI, p. 203 ff.<sup>83</sup> But whatever be the exact date of the original, in our extant copies the old traditional gestures are lost and the gesture of everyday life supplied. In fact, in the analyses appended by Leo, van Wageningen and Warnecke, in the works cited above, we arrive at little but that the gestures natural to any Italian-born person in a like situation are reproduced, such as "gestus abeuntis, cogitantis, parasiti," etc. It is almost too much to make any of this a basis for argument as to classical and pre-classical stage-craft. It is at least significant that every character with hands free is gesticulating and the scene from *Eun.* IV. 6-7 is evidently full of vigorous action.

An old and discursive article<sup>84</sup> by T. Baden, containing a description and analysis of the gestures and posture of a number of familiar figures from comedy exemplified in some collections of statuettes (chiefly those in Borgia's Museum of Baden's time), is open to the same objection as the above. The gestures of slave, pander, parasite, etc., described in the article are lively and expressive to be sure, but contain little to differentiate them from those of daily life.

While much of our evidence is still to come, we believe that we are already justified in the deduction that the actor contemporary with Plautus must have indulged in the extravagances of the players in the Atellan farces and the mimes. The *mimus* of the Empire, we know, specialized in ridiculous facial contortions.<sup>85</sup>

We must not forget too the vivacity indicated by the comic scenes among the Pompeian and Herculanean wall-paintings,<sup>86</sup> which have a close kinship with the Terentian MSS. pictures. Nor must we lose sight of the fact that all our pictorial *reliquiae* portray the later masked characters, and hence play of feature, which must have been a notable concomitant of the original Plautine performance, is entirely obscured.

<sup>83</sup>Their precise age and antiquity have been disputed with some acrimony. With Sittl cf. Bethe, *Praef. Cod. Ambros.* p. 64; van Wageningen, *op. cit.*, p. 50 ff.; Leo in *Rhein. Mus.* XXXVIII, p. 342 ff. V. reproductions in Wieseler, *Theatergebäude und Denkmäler des Bühnenwesens bei den Griechen und Römern*, Tafel X; and Bethe, ed. of *Codex Ambrosianus*.

<sup>84</sup>*Neue Jahr.*, Sup. Band I (1832), p. 447 ff.

<sup>85</sup>Quint. VI. 3.29, Mart. Cap., Chap. 43, p. 543 ed. Kopp.

<sup>86</sup>V. reproductions in Baumeister, *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums*, s. v. "Lustspiel" and Wieseler, *op. cit.*, note 83.

As our intention is fundamentally to get at the original intent of our poet and his actors, a discussion of the mask is not in order. Whether we agree with Donatus' statement that masks were first introduced for comedy and tragedy by Cincius Faliscus and Minucius Prothymus respectively,<sup>87</sup> or with Diomedes' explanation<sup>88</sup> that Roscius adopted them to disguise his pronounced squint, it is certain that they were not worn in Plautus' time, when wigs and make-up were employed for characterization.<sup>89</sup> In fact, the early performances of Plautus, unless we except the original Terentian productions, stand almost alone in the history of Graeco-Roman comedy as unmasked plays. This would give opportunity for the practice of lively grimace and facial play.

The text itself contains not infrequent descriptions of the outward appearance of the characters, often pointing to grotesqueries of make-up that rival those of the Old Comedy. From *As.* 400-1 we learn that Saurea was:

Macilentis malis, rufulus, aliquantum ventriosus,  
Truculentis oculis, commoda statura, tristi fronte.

In the *Mer.* Lysimachus is described as a veritable *thensaurus mali* (639-40):

Canum, varum, ventriosum, buculentum, breviculum,  
Subnigris oculis, oblongis malis, pansam aliquantulum.

Curculio was one-eyed: "Unocule, salve" (*Cur.* 392). Pseudolus must have been a joy to the groundlings (*Ps.* 1218 ff.):

<sup>87</sup>Donat. *de Com.* VI. 3. There is some suspicion that the names have been interchanged.

<sup>88</sup>*Ars Gram.* III, p. 489.10 K; Festus, s.v. *personata*, p. 217. Cf. Cic. *de Nat. Deo.* I. 28.79. Ribbeck, *Römische Tragödie* p. 661, and Dziatzko in *Rhein. Mus.* XXI. 68, have made a violent effort to reconcile the conflicting statements by arguing that Roscius belonged to the troupe of Minucius. This is denied by Weinberger, *Wien. Stud.* XIV. 126. For further discussion v. van Wageningen, *Scaen. Rom.* p. 34 ff.; Leo in *Rhein. Mus.* XXXVIII. 342; Oehmichen, op. cit. p. 250; B. Arnold, *Ueber Antike Theatermasken*; Teuffel, *Römische Literaturgeschichte* § 16. Sec. 13; Pauly-Wissowa, op. cit., s. v. *histrio*, pp. 2120-21. A recent article by Saunders (A. J. P., XXXII, p. 58) gives an admirable summing-up of the whole controversy, with substantial proof that at any rate the performers of Plautus' day were unmasked.

<sup>89</sup>Diom. III. p. 489.10 K. Cf. Saunders, *Costume in Roman Comedy*; Marquardt-Mommsen, *Handbuch der römischen Allertümer*, VI. p. 525; Pauly-Wissowa, l. c. Cf. Cic. *ad Fam.* VII. 6.



Rufus quidam, ventriosus, crassis suris, subniger,  
 Magno capite, acutis oculis, ore rubicundo, admodum  
 Magnis pedibus. BA. Perdidisti, ut nominavisti pedes.  
 Pseudolus fuit ipse.

His red slave's wig is thus made a feature in the characterization.  
 (Cf. Ter. *Phor.* 51). When Trachalio is looking for the procurer,  
 he inquires (*Rud.* 316 ff.):

Ecquem

Recalvom ad Silanum senem, statutum, ventriosum,  
 Tortis superciliis, contracta fronte. . . ?<sup>90</sup>

The precise details of the histrionic technique and "stage business" in vogue must remain more or less a mystery to us. Our limitations in this respect are admirably enunciated by Saunders (TAPA. XLIV, p. 97): "One must conclude then, that it is dangerous to dogmatize on this subject, as on most others connected with the early Roman stage. Our evidence is too slight and the period of time involved is too long. . . ." We can, therefore, deal in little but generalities. The Romans must have imitated and developed their Greek and Etruscan models.<sup>91</sup> When Livius Andronicus first fathered *palliatae*, he must have chosen the New Comedy not only as the type of drama most available to him, but as wholly adaptable to his audiences. When Plautus wrote, he had the machinery already built for him, and he doubtless seized upon the *palliata* form as the natural medium for the exploitation of his talents. By Cicero's time considerable technical equipment was required; the actor must be an adept in gesticulation, gymnastic and dancing.<sup>92</sup> Appreciable refinement had been reached in Quintilian's age, for he scores the comic actor who departs too far from reality and pronounces the ideal player him who declaims with a measured artistic heightening of everyday discourse.<sup>93</sup> It is noteworthy that this practically coincides with the accepted standard of modern realistic acting. But the Plautine actor could never have felt himself trammelled by any such narrow and sophisticated restrictions, as we believe the evidence accumulated above amply proves. At any rate, the delineation of different roles must have been at all times strictly in character. The need

<sup>90</sup>Cf. *Mil.* 629 ff., 923, *Ps.* 967, *Rud.* 125 f., 313 f., 1303, *Trin.* 861 f., *Truc.* 286 ff.; Ter., *Phor.* 51.

<sup>91</sup>V. van Wageningen, op. cit. pp. 40 f.

<sup>92</sup>*De Or.* III. 22.83.

<sup>93</sup>II. 10.13. Cf. XI. 3.91.

of feminine vocal tones, unless another jest is intended, is indicated by *Rud.* 233:

Certe vox muliebris auris tetigit meas.

And Quintilian admonishes the youth who is taking lessons from a comic actor in voice-production not to carry his precepts so far as to imitate the female falsetto, the senile tremolo, the obsequiousness of the slave, the stuttering accents of intoxication or the intonations of love, greed, fear.<sup>94</sup>

Where Dónatus gives instructions as to the vocal expression with which certain lines are to be delivered, as in the case of his comments on gesture, they are almost painfully evident from the context. He cites for instance irony,<sup>95</sup> anger,<sup>96</sup> exhaustion,<sup>97</sup> amazement,<sup>98</sup> sympathy,<sup>99</sup> pity.<sup>100</sup> He appears as the lineal ancestor of the modern "coach" of amateur theatricals in somewhat naively remarking<sup>101</sup> that upon leaving Thais for two days, Phaedria must pronounce "two days" as if "two years" were written.

Another phase of the delivery of the dialogue that deserves passing mention is song and musical accompaniment. Livy's anecdote<sup>102</sup> of the employment by Livius Andronicus of a boy to sing for him while he gesticulated is almost universally accepted as an exceptional instance, prompted by the failing of Livius' voice through age.<sup>103</sup> We are now fairly well informed of the tripartite division of the dialogue into *canticum* or song proper, recitative, and *diverbium* or spoken utterance,<sup>104</sup> with the incidental accompaniment of the *tibia*. Though there may be some dispute as to

<sup>94</sup>I. II. I-2.

<sup>95</sup>Donat. ad *And.* 505, *Eun.* 224, 288, 403, *Ad.* 187, 395.

<sup>96</sup>Ad *And.* 194, 301, *Eun.* 467, 986, *Hec.* 98, 439, 640, *Ad.* 101. Cf. *Ad.* 96: cum admiratione indignantis; 97: intento digito et infestis in Micionem oculis.

<sup>97</sup>Ad *Eun.* 1055.

<sup>98</sup>Ad *And.* 633, *Eun.* 233, 451, *Hec.* 63, *Ad.* 259.

<sup>99</sup>Ad *Phor.* 145.

<sup>100</sup>Ad *Ad.* 200.

<sup>101</sup>Ad *Eun.* 187.

<sup>102</sup>VII. 2.8-10.

<sup>103</sup>Cf. Diom. 491. 23 ff., K; Ribbeck, *Röm. Trag.* p. 634, believes that this was the rule, but he is apparently alone in the opinion. Cf. Bodensteiner in Bursian's *Jahresbericht* CVI, p. 162 ff., who agrees with the proof of van Eck, *Quaest. Scen. Rom.* (Amsterdam 1892), that it was an isolated instance.

<sup>104</sup>We are not even remotely concerned with metrical analysis. For that phase, with a discussion as to the effect of the various metrical systems, see Klotz, *Grundzüge der altrömischen Metrik*, esp. p. 370 ff. Cf. Duff, *A Lit. Hist. of Rome*, p. 196. Note Donat. *de Com.* VIII. 9 and Diom. 491.23 K.

the apportionment of the various classes, the general truth is established.<sup>106</sup> The important feature of this for our purpose is that, if the ancient tragedy with its music and dancing was rather comparable to modern grand opera than to drama proper, the song and musical accompaniment of comedy lend it a strong flavor of the opera bouffe and even of the musical comedy of to-day. In Part II we shall draw numerous other parallels between this style of composition and the plays of Plautus. West, in A. J. P. VIII. 33, notes one of the few comparisons to "comic opera" that we have seen. Fay, in the Introduction to his ed. of the *Most.* (§ 11), likens Plautine drama to "an opera of the early schools."

One feature of the performance still remains to be discussed—the "stage-business," that is, the movements of the actors apart from mere gesticulation and dialogue. Much of this too will find a place in Part II, in the treatment of special peculiarities, but in general we note here that the text itself contains many indications that are as plain as printed stage directions regarding the movements being made or about to be made by the characters. Examples of the more significant follow: *Amph.* 308: Cingitur: Certe expedit se; 312: Perii, pugnus ponderat. (Sosia speaks aside of Mercury and similarly during the succeeding scene); 903: Potin ut abstineas manum?; 955: Aperiantur aedis. This motif is commonplace and frequent; 958: Vos tranquillos video; 1130: quam valide tonuit; *As.* 39: Age, age, usque excrea; *Bac.* 668: quod sic terram optuere?; *Cap.* 557: Viden tu hunc, quam inimico voltu intuitur?; 594: Ardent oculi;<sup>106</sup> 793: Hic homo pugilatum incipit; *Ep.* 609: illi caperrat frons severitudine; *Mer.* 138: iam dudum sputo sanguinem; *Mil.* 1324: Ne fle; *Most.* 1030: vocis non habeo satis. (He must have been shouting); *Ps.* 458: Statum vide hominis, Callipho, quam basilicum; 955: transvorsus . . . cedit, quasi cancer solet; *Trin.* 623 f.: celeri gradu eunt uterque: ille reprehendit hunc priorem pallio.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>106</sup>For arguments as to the divisions of the three classes, v., besides Klotz, Ritschl, *Parerga* p. 40; Conradt, *Die metrische Komposition der Komödien des Terenz* (Berlin 1876); Bücheler in *Neue Jahr. für Phil.* CXLI (1871), p. 273 ff.; Dziatzko in *Rhein. Mus.* XXVI (1871), pp. 97–100; G. Hermann, *de Canticis in Romanorum Fabulis, Opusc.* I. 290; which have all been landmarks in the discussion. Cf. also Teuffel, *Röm. Lit.*, § 16. Sec. 5, etc.

<sup>106</sup>Cf. Cic. *de Or.* II. 46.193.

<sup>107</sup>Cf. *As.* 265, 587, 640, 403, *Bac.* 611, *Cap.* 637, *Cas.* 845 ff., *Cis.* 53 ff., *Cur.* 278, 309, 311, *Ep.* 623 ff., *Men.* 828 f., 910, *Mer.* 599 f., *Mil.* 200 ff.

This practice of indicating business in the lines, of making the play act, is common to all the older types of drama, Elizabethan as well as classic. A single striking example from Shakespeare will furnish a parallel, in the well-known lines from *Macbeth*:

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon,  
Where gott'st thou that goose look? (V. 3).

The modern playwright robs his lines of their vividness and throws the onus on the actor through the medium of his interpolated direction, a custom which reaches its most exaggerated form in the plays of Bernard Shaw, as mentioned above.

We have now made a perceptible advance towards getting an answer to our original questions: "What manner of drama is this?" and "How was it done?" The comments of  
THESIS the most eminent critics on the former question have left us rather bewildered by their diversity. Almost to a man they have taken Plautus too seriously or else have arraigned him for not conforming to their preconceived code of comedy, without questioning whether it were Plautus' own or not. This has really nullified their efforts to explain away the peculiarities and absurdities of his style. Some *solvent* of these difficulties is needed.

As to the second question, we have examined briefly the extant evidence regarding the actor's employment of gesture and business, his delivery of the dialogue, make-up and character delineation, and found a disappointing paucity, but a general and irresistible trend towards liveliness, vivacity and broad undiluted comedy that must have been the sort of dramatic fare demanded by the primeval appetite of the Plautine audience. But again we find ourselves falling short of a satisfying answer to our question. Again, some *solvent* is needed. As the last resort, we turn to the evidence of the plays themselves and the unbounded realm of subjective criticism.

From the earliest times gesture and business in Aristophanes and the Old Comedy were marked by the riotous license of all the media of that notable epoch<sup>108</sup> of comedy. From the broad spirit of its (quoted *infra*, Part II), 798-9 (Palaestrio must shout at Periplecomenus to provoke such a reply), *Most.* 265 ff., 594, *Per.* 307 f., *Ps.* 911, 1287, *St.* 271, 288 f., *Trin.* 1099, *Truc.* 276, 476 ff., 549, 593 f., 599 ff., 822. Cf. also *Ter. Phor.* 210-11 and Molière's imitation in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, I. 4.

<sup>108</sup>Cf. Sittl, *Gebärden*, p. 201 and Warnecke's citations from the Scholiast to Aristophanes in *Neue Jahr.* 1910, p. 592.

frank and vivid burlesque not even the most stolidly Teutonic of humorless critics ever thought of demanding a "picture of life." But with the abandonment of the purpose of political propaganda, the consequent disappearance of the chorus with its burlesque trappings (largely through motives of state economy), and the establishment in the New Comedy of a type of dramatic machinery that had a specious outer shell of reflection of characters and events in daily life, the critics instantly seem to demand the standard of dramatic technique of Aristotle and Freytag and condemn all departures from this standard. In reality, we believe that the kinship of Plautus with Aristophanes is much closer than has usually been realized.

Is, then, the change from Old to New Comedy as great as has been represented? Does not the change consist rather in the outer form and in the ideas expounded than in the spirit of the histrionism and mimicry? And must not the vigor, from what we have seen, have been intensified in Plautus? LeGrand alone seems to have caught the essence of this:<sup>109</sup> "Que dire de la mimique? D'après les indications contenues dans le texte même des comédies, d'après les commentaires—notamment ceux de Donat, d'après les monuments figurés—en particulier les images des manuscrits, elle devait être en general très vive, souvent trop vive pour le goût des modernes. . . . Et puis, ils s'adressaient à des spectateurs méridionaux, coutumiers dans la vie quotidienne d'une gesticulation plus animée que la nôtre." And this is said as a combined estimate of New Comedy and *palliatae*.

We are now prepared to advance a definite thesis, that shall gather up the random threads of argument and suggestion scattered through the foregoing pages and shall, we hope, provide a conclusive and final answer to both of our original questions. If we can establish: that our author's sole aim was to feed the popular hunger for amusement; that, while after leaving much of his Greek originals practically untouched, he considered them in effect but a medium for the provocation of laughter, but a vessel into which to pour a highly seasoned brew of fun; that to this end his actors went before the public, potentially speaking slap-stick in hand, equipped by nature with liveliness of grimace and gesture and prepared to act with verve, unctious and an abandon of dash and vigor that would produce a riot of merriment; that his dramatic machinery is

<sup>109</sup>Daos, p. 617.

hopelessly crippled and that his evident intentions and effects are hopelessly lost unless interpreted in this spirit: then we relegate Plautine drama to a low plane of broad farce, where verisimilitude to life becomes wholly unnecessary because undesirable; where the canons of dramatic art become inoperative; where, contrary to what Körting says, we are not asked to believe that "everything is happening in a perfectly natural manner"; where the poet may stick at nothing provided the laugh be forthcoming; where all the apparently absurd conventions of *palliatae* cease to be absurd, vanish into thin air and become unamenable to literary criticism, inasmuch as they are all only part of the laugh-compelling scheme. This is the *solvent* that we propose. To establish this, let us proceed to an examination of the internal mechanism of the plays.

## PART II

### *AN ANALYSIS OF THE DRAMATIC VALUES IN PLAUTUS*

THE salient features that characterize the plays of Plautus include both his consciously employed means of producing his comic effects, and the peculiarities and abnormalities that evidence his attitude of mind in writing them. We should make bold to catalogue them as follows:

I. Machinery characteristic of the lower types of modern drama—farce, low comedy, musical comedy, burlesque shows, vaudeville, and the like.

A. Devices self-evident from the text.

1. Bombast and mock-heroics.
- ✓ 2. Horse-play and slap-sticks.
- ✓ 3. Burlesque, farce and extravagance of situation and dialogue.
  - a. True burlesque.
  - b. True farce.
  - c. Extravagances obviously unnatural and merely for the sake of fun.

B. Devices absurd and inexplicable unless interpreted in a broad farcical spirit.

1. The running slave.
2. Wilful blindness.
3. Adventitious entrance.

II. Evidences of loose composition which prove a disregard of technique and hence indicate that entertainment was the sole aim.

A. Solo speeches and passages.

- ✓ 1. Asides and soliloquies.
2. Lengthy monodies, monologues and episodical specialties.
- ✓ 3. Direct address of the audience.

B. Inconsistencies and carelessness of composition.

1. Pointless badinage and padded scenes.
- ✓ 2. Inconsistencies of character and situation.
3. Looseness of dramatic construction.
4. Roman admixture and topical allusions.
5. Jokes on the dramatic machinery.
- ✓ 6. Use of stock plots and characters.

Let us illustrate these points by typical passages and endeavor to insert such stage-directions as would indicate how the most telling effects could be produced and hence aid the reader in visualizing the actual performance.

## I

### MACHINERY CHARACTERISTIC OF THE LOWER TYPES OF MODERN DRAMA

#### A. *Devices self-evident from the text.*

##### 1. Bombast and mock-heroics.

It is a little difficult to sublimate this entirely from burlesque, but its true nature is instanced by the opening lines of the *Miles*, where the vainglorious Pyrgopolinices, with many a sweep and strut, addresses his attendants, who are probably staggering under the weight of an enormous shield:

"Have a care that the effulgence of my shield be brighter than e'er the sun's rays in a cloudless sky: when the time for action comes and the battle's on, I intend it shall dazzle the eyesight o' m' foes. (*Patting his sword*). Verily I would condole with this m' sword, lest he lament and be cast down in spirit, forasmuch as now full long hath he hung idle by m' side, thirsting, poor lad, to meet his fellow 'mongst the foe," and so on.

In line with this, a simulation of the military is a favorite device. So we find Pseudolus addressing the audience in ringing blustering tones and with grandiose gesture (*Ps.* 584 ff.):

"It now becomes my aim today to lay siege to this town and capture it," (*Ballio the procurer is the town*). "I shall hurl all my legions against it. If I take it, . . . good luck to you, my citizens, for part of the booty shall be yours."

This finds a close counterpart in the *Mil.* 219 ff., a passage which West<sup>1</sup> thinks was deliberately inserted to rouse the populace into demanding that Scipio be at once despatched to Africa.

Periplocomenus is urging Palaestrio to find a stratagem. Actually he probably addresses the pit:

"Don't you see that the enemy are upon you and investing your rear? Call a council of war, reach out for stores and reinforcements in this crisis: haste, haste, no time to waste! Make a detour through some pass, forestall your foes, beleaguer them, protect our troops! Cut off the enemy's base of supplies!" etc.

<sup>1</sup>A. J. P. VIII. 15 ff.



Whether this passage had an ulterior purpose or not, the motif is frequent.<sup>2</sup> So we find Chrysalus in *Bac.* 925 ff. holding the stage for an entire scene with an elaborate comparison of himself to Ulysses, the brains of the Greek host, overcoming his master Nicobulus who represents Priam.

In general the mocking assumption of an heroic attitude recurs with sufficient frequency to stamp it as a staple of comic effect. Many passages would become tiresome and meaningless instead of amusing unless so interpreted. The soliloquy of Mnesilochus in *Bac.* 500 ff. could be made interesting only by turgid ranting. Similarly in *Bac.* 530 ff. and 612 ff.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Horse-play and slap-sticks.

By this we mean what can in nowise be so clearly defined as by "rough-house." For instance, the turbulent Euclio in *Aul.* delivers bastings impartially to various *dramatis personae* and as a climax drives the cooks and music-girl pell-mell out of the house, doubtless accompanied by deafening howling and clatter (415 ff.). Similarly in the *Cas.* (875 ff.) Chalinus routs Olympio and the lecherous Lysidamus. We may well imagine that such scenes were preceded as well as accompanied by a fearful racket within (a familiar device of our low comedy and extravaganza), the effect probably heightened by tempestuous *melodrama* on the *tibiae*, as both the scenes cited are in *canticum*.

✓ In the *Men.* we are treated to a free fight, in which the valiant Messenio routs the *lorarii* by vigorous punches, while Menaechmus plants his fist in one antagonist's eye (*Men.* 1011 ff.):

(Menaechmus of Epidamnus is seized by *lorarii*; as he struggles, Messenio, slave of Menaechmus Sosicles, rushes into the fray to his rescue). "MES. I say! Gouge out that fellow's eye, the one that's got you by the shoulder, master. Now as for these rotters, I'll plant a crop of fists on their faces. (*Lays about.*) By Heaven, you'll be everlastingly sorry for the day you tried to carry my master off. Let go!

MEN. (*Joining in with a will.*) I've got this fellow by the eye!

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *As.* 554 ff., *Bac.* 710 ff., *Cap.* 159 ff., *Cur.* 572 ff., *Ep.* 437 ff., *Men.* 134 ff., *Per.* 753 ff., *Ps.* 761 ff., *Trin.* 718 ff., etc.

<sup>3</sup>For further examples of bombast and mock-heroics v. *As.* 405-6, *Bac.* 792 f., 842 ff., *Cis.* 640 ff., *Cur.* 96 ff., 439 ff., *Ep.* 181 ff. (in similar vein most of the soliloquies of the name part), *Mer.* 469 ff., 601 ff., 830 ff., *Mil.* 459 ff., 486 ff., 947 ff., *Per.* 251 ff., *Poen.* 470 ff., 1294 ff., *Ps.* 1063 f., *Truce.* 482 ff., 602 ff.

MES. Bore it out! A hole's good enough for his face! You villians, you thieves, you robbers! (*General mêlée. Lorarii weaken.*)

LOR. We're done for! Oh Lord, please!

MES. Let go then!

MEN. What right had you to lay hands on me? Give them a good beating up! (*Lorarii break and scatter wildly under the ferocious onslaught.*)

MES. Come, clear out! To the devil with you all! That for you! (*Strikes.*) You're the last; here's *your* reward! (*Strikes again.*)"

The lines themselves are sufficiently graphic and need but little annotation. Other pugilistic activities crop up at not infrequent intervals in the text,<sup>4</sup> and in *Ps.* 135 ff. Ballio generously plies the whip. In the lacuna of the *Amph.* after line 1034, Mercury probably bestows a drenching on Amphitruo<sup>5</sup>. In *As.* III. 3, especially 697 ff., Libanus makes his master Argyrippus "play horsey" with him, doubtless with indelicate buffonery. With invariable energy, even so simple a matter as knocking on doors is made the excuse for raising a violent disturbance, as in *Amph.* 1019 f. and 1025: Paene effregisti, fatue, foribus cardines.<sup>6</sup> And this idea is actually parodied in *As.* 384 ff. No, Plautus did not allow his public to languish for want of noise.

3. Burlesque, farce and extravagance of situation and dialogue.

Under this head we include such conscious strivings for comic effect as are frankly and plainly exaggerated and hyper-natural.

a. True burlesque.

This is in effect pure parody, cartooning. Patent burlesque of tragedy appears in *Trin.* 820 ff. (*Charmides returns from abroad.*)

"CHAR. To Neptune, ruler of the deep, and puissant brother unto Jove and Nereus, do I in joy and gladness cry my praises and gratefully proclaim my gratitude; and to the briny waves, who held me in their power, yea, even my chattels and my very life, and from their realms restored me to the city of my birth," etc., etc.

<sup>4</sup>V. *Amph.* 370 ff., *As.* 431, *Cas.* 404 ff., *Cur.* 192 ff., 624 ff., *Mil.* 1394 ff., *Mos.* 1 ff., *Per.* 809 ff., *Poen.* 382 ff., *Rud.* 706 ff.

<sup>5</sup>V. *Frag.* IV, G., & S., ap. Non. p. 543.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. *Bac.* 581 ff., 1119, *Cap.* 830 ff., *Most.* 898 ff., *Rud.* 414, *St.* 308 ff., *Truc.* 254 ff.

To tickle the ears of the groundlings, this must have been delivered in grandiloquent mimicry with all the paraphernalia of the tragic style. Horace notes a kindred manifestation of this tendency (to which he himself is pleasingly addicted), in *Ep.* II. 3.93 f.:

Interdum tamen et vocem comoedia tollit

Iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore.

Tragic burlesque is again beautifully exemplified in *Ps.* 702 ff. The versatile Pseudolus after a significant aside: "I'll address the fellow in high-sounding words," says to his master Calidorus:

"Hail! Hail! Thee, thee, O mighty ruler, thee do I beseech who art lord over Pseudolus. Thee do I seek that thou mayst obtain thrice three times triple delights in three various ways, joys earned by three tricks and three tricksters, cunningly won by treachery, fraud and villainy, which in this little sealed missive have I but erstwhile brought to thee. . . .

CHAR. The rascal's spouting like a tragedian."

When Sosia, in the first scene of *Amph.* (203 ff.), turgidly describes the battle between the Thebans and Teleboans, he is parodying the Messenger of tragedy. Another echo from tragedy is heard at the end of the play, when Jupiter appears in the role of *deus ex machina*.<sup>7</sup>

Burlesque of character and calling puts in an occasional appearance. The recreant Sosia in *Amph.* 958 ff. mimics the dutiful slave. *As.* 259 ff. contains an ironical treatment of augury, while in 751 ff. the poet has his satirical fling at the legal profession.

b. True farce.

This is of course the comedy of situation and finds its mainstay in mistaken identity. The *Men.* and *Amph.* with their doubles are farce-comedies proper, but the element of farce forms the motive power of nearly all the plots; for example, the shuffling-up of Acropolistis, Telestis and the *fidicina* in *Ep.*, the quarrel between Mnesilochus and Pistoclerus in *Bac.* resulting from the former's belief that his friend had stolen his sweetheart, the exchange of names between Tyndarus and Philocrates in *Cap.*, the entrapping of Demaenetus with the *meretrix* at the dénouement of *As.*, etc.,

<sup>7</sup>Cf. also *Bac.* 925 ff., *Per.* 251 ff., *Men.* 409 ff. (v. supra, Part I, § 1, s. v. *Festus, Brix*). On *Bac.* 933, v. Ribbeck, *Scaenicae Romanorum Poesis Fragmenta*, on Enn., frag. *Androm.* 81; Kiessling, *Analecta Plautina*, I. 14 f.; Ostermayer, *De historia fabulari in comoediis Plautinis*, p. 9. On *Men.* 808 ff., v. Kiessling, II. 9.

etc. It is understood, we presume, that the modern farce occupies no exalted position in the comic scale, is distinguished by the grotesquerie of its characters, incidents and dialogue, and is indulgently permitted to stray far from the paths of realism. Even in Shakespearian farce, note the exaggerated antics of the two Dromios in "The Comedy of Errors." It is significant then that farce is a staple of our plays.

The farcical element is strikingly exemplified in *Amph.* 365-462, where Mercury persuades Sosia that he is not himself. Impersonation and assumption of a role is another noteworthy and frequent medium of plot motivation. In *As.* 407 ff. Leonida tries to palm himself off as the *atriensis*. Note the violent efforts of the two slaves to wheedle the cunning ass-dealer (449 ff.). In *Cas.* 815 ff. Chalinus enters disguised as the blushing bride. In *Men.* 828 ff. ✓ Menaechmus Sosicles pretends madness in a clever scene of uproarious humor.<sup>7</sup> In the *Mil.* (411 ff.) Philocomasium needs only to change clothing to appear in the role of her own hypothetical twin sister, and in 874 ff. and 1216 ff. the *meretrix* plays *matrona*. Sagaristio and the daughter of the *leno* impersonate Persians (*Per.* 549 ff.), Collabiscus becomes a Spartan (*Poen.* 578 ff.), Simia as Harpax gets Ballio's money (*Ps.* 905 ff.), the sycophant is garbed as messenger (*Trin.* 843 ff.), Phronesium elaborately pretends to be a mother (*Truc.* 499 ff.). A swindle is almost invariably the object in view. But we have said enough on this score: no one who knows the plays at all can fail to recognize the predominance of farce. Compare on the modern stage the sudden appearance of "the long-lost cousin from Chicago."

c. Extravagances obviously unnatural and merely for the sake of fun.

This group of course often contains marked features of burlesque and farce, and hence shows a close kinship with the foregoing.

The extravagance of the love-sick swain is a fruitful source of this species of caricature. The ridiculous Calidorus, always wearing his heart on his sleeve, rolls his eyes, brushes away a tear and says (*Ps.* 38 ff.): "But for a short space have I been e'en as a lily of the field. Suddenly sprang I up, as suddenly I withered." The irreverent Pseudolus replies: "Oh, shut up while I read the letter over." Calidorus finds his counterpart in Phaedromus of the *Cur.*, who, accompanied by his slave, approaches milady's abode (*Cur.* 10 ff.):

"PH. (*In languishing accents, with eyes cast upward*): Shall I not take sweets to the sweet: what is culled by the toil of the busy bees to my own little honey? . . . (*They advance to milady's doorway which he sprinkles with wine, 88 ff.*): Come, drink, ye portals of pleasure, quaff and deign to be propitious unto me.

PALINURUS SER. (*Addressing the door with mimicry of Phaedromus' airs.*) Do you want some olives or sweetmeats or capers?

PH. (*Continuing.*) Arouse your portress; hither send her unto me. (*Lavishes the wine.*)

PAL. (*In great alarm, grasping his arm.*) You're spilling the wine! What's got hold of you?

PH. Unhand me! (*Gently shakes himself loose.*) Lo! The temple of joys untold is opening. Did not the hinge creak? 'Tis charming!

PAL. (*Turning aside in disgust.*) Why don't you give it a kiss?"

In each case the impertinent slave provides the foil. When the lovers succeed in meeting, they are interlocked in embrace from 172 to 192, probably invested with no small amount of suggestive "business." This would doubtless hardly be tolerated by the "censor" today. Another variety of lover's extravagance is the lavishing of terms of endearment, as we find in *Cas.* 134 ff.<sup>8</sup>

When this feature of "extravagance" enters the situation instead of the dialogue, we have episodes such as the final scene of the *Ps.*, where the name character is irrelevantly introduced (1246) in a state of intoxication which, with copious belching in Simo's face, culminates in a rebellion of the overloaded stomach (1294). We can scarcely doubt that such business was carried out in ultragraphic detail and rewarded by copious guffaws from the populace. In sharp contrast to this, the drunkenness of Callidamates in *Most.* 313 ff. is depicted with unusual artistry, but still from the very nature of such a scene it may be labeled "extravagant."

Manifestation of violent anger is another source of exaggerated stage business. *Ep.* 512 ff. should be interpreted somewhat as follows:

<sup>8</sup>Cf. further *As.* 606 ff., *Cur.* 147 ff., *Most.* 233 ff., *Poen.* 275 ff. and passim, *Truc.* 434 ff.

"(*The deluded Periphanes has just discovered that the fidicina is an impostor and not his daughter.*) FID. (*Sweetly.*) Do you want me for anything else?

PER. (*Stamping foot and shaking fists in a passion.*) The foul fiend take you to utter perdition! Clear out, and quickly too!

FID. (*In alarm.*) Won't you give me back my harp?

PER. Nor harp nor pipes! So hurry up and get out of here, if you know what's good for you!

FID. (*Stamping her foot in tearful rage.*) I'll go, but you'll have to give them back later just the same and it will be all the worse for you.

PER. (*Striding up and down in wildest anger.*) What! . . . shall I let her go unpunished? Nay, even if I have to lose as much again, I'll lose it rather than let myself be mocked and despoiled with impunity!" and so on.<sup>9</sup>

Other random scenes that may be classed as "extravagant" are found in Strobilus' cartoon of Euclio (*Aul.* 300 ff.), Demipho's discovery in the distance of a mythical bidder for the girl (*Mer.* 434 ff.), Charinus' playing "horsey" and taking a trip in his imaginary car (*Mer.* 930 ff.), and the loud "boo-hoo" to which Philocomasium gives vent (*Mil.* 1321 ff.). These all might be classed under either "farce" or "burlesque," but they seem to come more exactly under the kindred head of "extravagance."

A familiar figure in modern farce-comedy is the comic conspirator with finger on lip, tiptoeing round in fear of listeners. He finds his prototype in *Trin.* (146 ff.):

"(*Callicles and Megaronides converse.*)

CAL. (*In a mysterious whisper.*) Look around a bit and make sure there's nobody spying on us—and please look around every few seconds. (*They pause and peer in every direction, perhaps creeping round on tiptoe.*)

MEG. Now, I am all ears.

CAL. When you're through, I'll talk. (*Pauses and nods.*) Just before Charmides went abroad, he showed me a treasure, (*stops and looks over his shoulders*) in his house here, in one of the rooms. (*Starts, as if at a noise.*) Look around! (*They repeat the search and return again.*)

<sup>9</sup>Cf. *Ep.* 580 ff. Cf. also "bombast," supra A. 1, and "copious abuse" infra, A. 3. c. Cf. also wall-painting labeled "Der erzürnte Hausherr," in Baumeister, *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums*, s. v. *Lustspiel*.

MEG. There's nobody."<sup>10</sup>

Another old stage friend is the detected plotter trying to lie out of an embarrassing situation. He is lineally descended from Tranio in the *Most*. Tranio has just induced his master Theopropides to pay forty minae to the money-lender on the pretext that Theopropides' son Philolaches has bought a house (659 ff.).

"TH. In what neighborhood did my son buy this house?

TR. (*Aside to audience in comic despair, with appropriate gesture.*) See there now! I'm a goner!

TH. (*Impatiently.*) Will you answer my question?

TR. Oh yes, but (*Stammering and displaying symptoms of acute embarrassment*) I—I'm trying to think of the owner's name. (*Groans.*)

TH. Well, hurry up and remember it!

TR. (*Rapidly, aside.*) I can't see anything better to do than tell him his son bought the house of our next-door neighbor here. (*With a shrug.*) Thunder, I've heard that a *steaming* lie is the best kind. (*Mock-heroically.*) 'Tis the will of the gods, my mind's made up.

TH. (*Who has been frowning and stamping in impatience.*) Well, well, well! Haven't you thought of it yet?

TR. (*Aside.*) Curses on him! . . . (*Finally turning and bursting out suddenly.*) It's our next-door neighbor here—your son bought the house from him. (*He sees that the lie goes and sighs with relief.*)"<sup>11</sup>

Another variation on this theme is the futile effort of the plotter to get rid of a character armed with incriminating evidence. Again we quote *Most*. (573 ff.), where Tranio is conversing with Theopropides. The money-lender from whom young Philolaches has borrowed appears on the other side of the stage. Tranio spies him. He must keep him away from the old man. With a hurried excuse he flies across to meet Misargyrides.

"TR. (*Taking Misargyrides' arm and attempting to steer him off-stage.*) I was never so glad to see a man in my life.

MIS. (*Suspiciously, holding back.*) What's the matter?

TR. (*Confidentially.*) Just step this way. (*Looks back apprehensively at Theopropides, who is regarding them suspiciously.*)

<sup>10</sup>Cf. *Mil.* 596 ff., *Most.* 454 ff., *Trin.* 517 ff.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. *Mer.* 748 ff., *Men.* 607 ff.

MIS. (*In a loud and offensive voice.*) Won't my interest be paid?

TR. I know you have a good voice; don't shout so loud.

MIS. (*Louder.*) Hang it, but I *will* shout! . . .

TR. (*Groans and glances over shoulder again.*) Run along home, there's a good fellow. (*Urges him toward exit.*)", etc.

Tranio has a chance for very lively business: a sickly smile for the usurer, lightning glances of apprehension towards Theopropides, with an occasional intimate groan aside to the audience. Other farcical scenes of the many that may be cited as calling for particularly vivacious business and gesture are, e. g., *Cas.* 621 ff., where Pardalisca befools Lysidamus by timely fainting, *Rud.* 414 ff., where Sceparnio flirts with Ampelisca, and the quarrel scene, *Rud.* 485 ff.<sup>12</sup>

The last four passages quoted in translation are by no means lacking in artistic humor and a measure of reality, but they imply a pronounced heightening of the actions and emotions of everyday life and lose their humor unless presented in the broad spirit that stamps them as belonging to the plane of farce. We now pass on to motives where the dialogue aims at effects manifestly unnatural and where verisimilitude is sacrificed to the joke, as we have seen it is in the employment of "bombast," "true burlesque," etc.

The first of these motives is a stream of copious abuse, as in *Per.* 406 ff., where Toxilus *servos* and Dordalus *leno* exchange Rabelaisian compliments.

"TOX. (*Hopping about with rabid gestures.*) You filthy pimp, you mud-heap, you common dung-hill, you bèsmirched, corrupt, law-breaking decoy, you public sewer, . . . robber, mobber, jobber, . . . !

DOR. (*Who has been dancing around in fury, shaking his fist until exhausted by his paroxysms.*) Wait—till—(*Puffing*)—I—get—my breath—I'll—answer you! You dregs of the rabble, you slave-brothel, you 'white-slave' freer, you sweat-of-the-lash, you chain gang, you king of the treadmill, . . . you eat-away, steal-away run-away. . . . !" etc.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps we have here the forerunner of the shrewish wife in modern vaudeville, who administers to her shrinking consort a

<sup>12</sup>Cf. further *Most.* 265 ff., 456 ff. and note Donat. ad *Phor.* 210-11: hic locus magis actoris quam lectoris est.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. *Most.* 38 ff., *Poen.* 1309 ff. Cf. also "Lavishing of terms of endearment," supra, A. 3. c.



rapid-fire tongue-lashing. Another phase of this profuse riot of words appears in the formidable Persian name that Sagaristio, disguised as a Persian, adopts in the *Per.* (700 ff.):

"DORDALUS. What's your name?

SAG. Listen then, and you shall hear: False-speaker-us Girl-seller-son Much-o'-nothing-talk-son Money-gouge-out-son Talk-up-to you-son Coin-wheedle-out-son What-I-once-get-son Never-give-up-son: there you are!

DOR. (*With staring eyes and gasping breath.*) Ye Gods! That's a variegated name of yours!

SAG. (*With a superior wave of the hand.*) It's the Persian fashion."

The second point in this category is own cousin to the above. We should label it persistent interruption and repetition. An excellent instance is *Trin.* 582 ff., when Stasimus, Lesbonicus and Philto have just hatched a plot. Philto departs.

"LES. (*To Stasimus.*) You attend to my instructions. I'll be there presently. Tell Callicles to meet me.

ST. Now you just clear out! (*Pushes him after Philto.*)

LES. (*Calls out as he is being shoved away.*) Tell him to see what has to be done about the dowry.

ST. Clear out!

LES. (*Raising his voice.*) For I'm determined not to marry her off without a dowry.

ST. Won't you clear out?

LES. (*Still louder.*) And I won't let her suffer harm by reason.—

ST. Get out, I say!

LES. (*Shouts.*)—of my carelessness.

ST. Clear out!

LES. It seems right that my own sins—

ST. Clear out!

LES.—should affect me alone.

ST. Clear out!

LES. (*Mock heroically.*) Oh father, shall I ever behold you again?

ST. Out, out, out! (*With a final shove.*) (*Exit Lesbonicus.*) At last, I've got him away! (*Breathes hard.*)"

The fun, if fun there be, lies in the hammer-like repetition of "I modo," a sort of verbal buffoonery. A clever actor could din this with telling effect. The device is employed several times.

In *Most.* 974 ff. the word is *aio*, in *Per.* 482 ff. *credo*, in *Poen.* 731 ff. *quippini*, in *Ps.* 484 ff. *va! γὰρ*, in *Rud.* 1212 ff. *licet* and 1269 ff. *censeo*. The last two examples are the lengthiest.<sup>14</sup>

The third of these motives is the introduction of clearly unnatural dialogue, wholly incidental and foreign to the action, for the sake of lugging in a joke. The *As.* (38 ff.) yields the following conversation between Demaenetus *senex* and his slave Libanus:

"LI. By all that's holy, as a favor to me, spit out the words you have uttered.

DE. All right, I'll be glad to oblige you. (*Coughs.*)

LI. Now, now, get it right up! (*Pats him on the back.*)

DE. More? (*Coughs.*)

LI. Gad, yes, please! Right from the bottom of your throat: more still! (*Pats.*)

DE. Well, how far down then?

LI. (*Unguardedly.*) Down to Hades is my wish!

DE. I say, look out for trouble!

LI. (*Diplomatically.*) For your wife, I mean, not for you.

DE. For that speech I bestow upon you freedom from punishment."<sup>15</sup>

The childish bandying of words in *Truc.* 858 ff. is egregiously tiresome in the reading, but in action could have been made to produce a modicum of amusement if presented in the broad burlesque spirit that we believe was almost invariably employed. This gives us a clue to the next topic.

B. *Devices absurd and inexplicable unless interpreted in a broad farcical spirit.*

This includes peculiarities that have usually been commented on as weaknesses or conventions, or else been given up as hopeless incongruities, but which we hope to prove also yield their quota of amusement if clownishly performed. The foremost of these is the famous

#### 1. Running Slave or Parasite.

We all know him: rushing madly cross stage at top-speed (if we take the literal word of the text for it), with girded loins, in search of somebody right under his nose, the while unburdening himself of exhaustive periods that, however great the breadth of the Roman

<sup>14</sup>Cf. also *Poen.* 426 ff., *Rud.* 938 ff.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. similarly *Cap.* 121 ff., 177 ff., *Cas.* 725 ff., *Most.* 909, 999 f. Cf. *infra* II. B. 5.

stage, would carry him several times across and back: as Curculio in 279 ff.:

"Make way for me, friends and strangers, while I carry out my duty here. Run, all of you, scatter and clear the road! I'm in a hurry and I don't want to butt into anybody with my head, or elbow, or chest, or knee. . . . And there's none so rich as can stand in my way, . . . none so famous but down he goes off the sidewalk and stands on his head in the street," and so on for ten lines or more. After he has found his patron Phaedromus, he is apparently so exhausted that he cries: "Hold me up, please, hold me up! (*Wobbles and falls panting into Phaedromus' arms.*)

PH. . . . Get him a chair . . . quick!"

When Leonida enters (*As.* 267 ff.) as the running slave, he is still out of breath at 326-7! Stasimus in *Trin.* 1008 ff., though his mission is also proclaimed as desperately urgent, pauses to declaim on public morals!

Considerable light has been thrown upon this subject recently by the dissertation of Weissman, *De servi currentis persona apud comicos Romanos* (Giessen, 1911), though his explanation of the *modus operandi* is inconclusive. Langen has commented on it at some length,<sup>16</sup> but offers no solution. Weise frankly admits:<sup>17</sup> "Wie sie gelaufen sind, ist ein Rätsel für uns." LeGrand<sup>18</sup> follows Weise's conclusion that it is an imitation from the Greek and in support of this instances Curculio's use, while running, of the presumed translations from the Greek: *agoranomus*, *demarchus*, etc. He also cites as parallels some unconvincing phrases from fragments of New Comedy, while developing an ingenious theory that the device is a heritage from the Greek orchestra, where it could have been performed with a hippodrome effect. Terence berates the practice,<sup>19</sup> but makes use of it himself.<sup>20</sup>

Weissman's conclusions are worth a summary. He notes the following as the usual essential concomitants: 1. It is mentioned

<sup>16</sup>*Plaut. Stud.* pp. 121 f. Cf. pp. 101, 137 f., 158 f., 217, 229 f.

<sup>17</sup>*Die Kom. des Pl.*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>18</sup>*Daos*, p. 430-1.

<sup>19</sup>*Prol. Haut.* 32-40, *Prol. Eun.* 35-40. Cf. Eugraphius ad *Haut.* 31: quid tale hic est, cum servus currit, cum populus discedit, quod domino insano obœdiat servus? Cf. also ad *Haut.* 37; Donatus ad *Phor.* 1.4.

<sup>20</sup>*And.* 338 ff., *Phor.* 179 ff., 841 ff., *Ad.* 299 ff. Weissman agrees with Donat. that in the last passage humor is not the object. Cf. *ancilla currens* in *Eun.* 643 ff.

in the text that the slave is on the run; 2. He is the bearer of news of moment; 3. He fails to recognize other characters on stage; 4. He is halted by the very man he is so violently seeking. He cites as the genuine occurrences of the *servus* or *parasitus currens*, besides the passages mentioned above, *Cap.* 781 ff., *Ep.* 1 ff., 192 ff., *Mer.* 111 ff., *Per.* 272 ff., *St.* 274 ff. Furthermore, he argues convincingly that this was an independent Roman development without a prototype on the Greek stage and neatly refutes Weise and LeGrand by proving that there are no extant Greek fragments sufficient to furnish a ground for any but the most tenuous argument. Above all, he correctly interprets the poet's aim with the dictum: "Praeterquam quod hac persona optime utitur ad actionem bene continuandam id maxime spectat ut per eam *spectatorum risum* captet." And this from a German youth of twenty-two!

It is in his attempt to explain the mechanism that we believe Weissman fails. He essays an exegesis of each passage, though the separate explanations are naturally similar. It will suffice to quote one, that to *As.* 267 ff.: "Hoc nullo modo aliter mihi declarari posse videtur nisi sic: Oratio Leonidae currentis maior est quam ut arbitrari possimus currentem semper eum habuisse eam. Ex versu 290 Leonidam de celeritate sua remisisse plane apparet. Quod semel solum eum fecisse cum non satis mihi esse videatur, saepius—bis vel ter—per breve tempus eum cursum suum interrupsisse, circumspexisse, Libanum autem non spectavisse (hoc consilium poetae erat, licentia poetica est) et hoc modo per totam scaenam cursum suum direxisse arbitror."

It will be observed that for lack of any tangible evidence he very properly makes use of subjective reasoning. Now it has long been the opinion of the writer that the maximum of comic effect (and that this was the purpose of the *servus currens* there can surely be no doubt) could best be obtained by the actor's making a violent and frenzied pretense of running while scarcely moving from the spot. Consider the ludicrous spectacle of the rapidly moving legs and the flailing arms, with the actor's face turned toward the audience, as he declaims sonorously of his haste to perform his vital errand, while making but a snail's progress. Truly then his plea of exhaustion would not be without excuse! This is an explanation at once simpler, more potentially comic, more in accord with what we predicate as the spirit of Plautus, and furthermore we

have seen roars of laughter created by the similar device of a low comedian in a modern extravaganza. Taking advantage of the same subjective license, we see nothing in Weissman's theory to offset our opinion. But, what is more, our subjective reconstruction is given color by a shred of tangible evidence. Suetonius (*Tib.* 38) refers to a popular quip on the emperor that compares him to an actor on the classic Greek stage: "Biennio continuo post ademptum imperium pedem porta non extulit; . . . ut vulgo iam per iocum Callip(p)ides vocaretur, quem cursitare ac ne cubiti quidem mensuram progredi proverbio Graeco notatum est." That this Callipides was the ὑποκριτής mentioned by Xenophon (*Sym.* III. 11), Plutarch (*Ages.* 21 and *Apophth. Lacon.*: s. v. *Ages.*), Cicero (*Ad. Att.* XIII. 12) and possibly by Aristotle (*Poet.* 26.), seems highly plausible. Compare the *saltus fullonius* (*Sen. Ep.* 15.4).

Most amusing of all is Plautus' introduction of a parody on the parody, when Mercury rushes in post-haste crying (*Amph.* 984 ff.):

"Make way, give way, everybody, clear the way! I tell you all: don't you get so bold as to stand in my road. For, egad! I'd like to know why I, a god, shouldn't have as much right to threaten the rabble as a mere slave in the comedies!"

And perhaps *St.* 307 is a joke on the running slave: Sed spatium hoc occidit: brevest curriculo: quam me paenitet? That violent haste was considered a slavish trait is evidenced by *Poen.* 522-3.

## 2. Wilful blindness.

In the scene recently quoted (*Cur.* 279 ff.), Curculio, after his violent exertions in search of his patron, is for a time apparently unable to discover him, though he is on the stage all the time. This species of blindness must be wilfully designed as a burlesque effect and again finds its echo in low comedy types of today. The breadth and depth of the Roman stage alone will not account for this either; indeed, its very size could be utilized to heighten the humor, as the actor peers hither and yon in every direction but the right one. So Curculio (front) may pass directly by Phaedromus (rear) without seeing him, to the huge delight of the audience, and turn back again, while saying (301 ff.):

"Is there anybody who can point out Phaedromus, my guardian angel, to me? The matter's very urgent: I must find this chap at once.

PALINURUS. (*To Phaedromus.*) It's you he's looking for.

PH. What do you say we speak to him? Hello, Curculio, I want you!

CUR. (*Stopping and again looking vainly round.*) Who's calling? Who says "Curculio"?

PH. Somebody that wants to see you.

CUR. (*At last recognizing him when almost on top of him.*) Ah! You don't want to see me any more than I want to see you."

Acanthio in *Mer.* 130 ff. is still more blind to the presence of Charinus and raises a deal more fuss, as he enters in the wildest haste looking for Charinus, who is of course in plain sight. Acanthio, with labored breathing and the remark that he would never make a piper, probably passes by Charinus and goes to the house.

"AC. What am I standing here for, anyway? I'll make splinters of these doors without a single qualm. (*Hammers violently. Charinus approaches, vainly trying to attract his attention.*) Open up, somebody! Where's my master Charinus, at home or out? (*Still hammering.*) Isn't anybody supposed to have the job of tending door?

CH. (*Shouting.*) Here I am, Acanthio! You're looking for me, aren't you?

AC. (*Still punishing the door.*) I never saw such slovenly management.

CH. (*Finally grabbing and shaking him.*) What the deuce has got hold of you?"<sup>21</sup> And so in the case of practically all the *servi currentes*.

The opening scene of the *Per.* (13 ff.) between two slaves apparently unable to distinguish each other's features from opposite sides of the stage affords an opportunity for a similar species of farcical by-play. Toxilus and Sagaristio stroll slowly in from the different side-entrances, alternately soliloquizing. Suddenly, when probably fairly close, both look up and peer curiously at each other:

"TOX. (*Shading his eyes with his hand.*) Who's that standing over there?

SAG. Who's this standing over here?

TOX. Looks like Sagaristio.

SAG. I bet it's my friend Toxilus.

TOX. He's the fellow, all right.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. *servi currentes* supra. Cf. also *Aul.* 811 ff., *Ep.* 195 ff., *Mer.* 865 ff., *Ps.* 243 ff., *St.* 330 ff., *Trin.* 1068 ff., *Truc.* 115 ff.

SAG. That's the chap, I'm sure.

TOX. I'll go over to him.

SAG. I'll go up and speak to him. (*They draw closer.*)

TOX. Sagaristio, I hope the gods are good to you.

SAG. Toxilus, I hope the gods give you everything you want.

How are you?

TOX. So so."<sup>22</sup>

Note that this *iscanticum* and the effect of the two "sing-singing" slaves on the audience must have been much the same as, upon us, the spectacle of a vaudeville "duo," entering from opposite wings and singing perchance a burlesque of grand opera at each other.

3. Adventitious entrance.

This is of a piece with the above, but is usually due to a weakness of composition, to the goddess Τύχη, who is the presiding deity of the plots of New Comedy.<sup>23</sup> However, there are times when appreciable fun can be extracted from this, if the actor speak in a bland jocular tone, taking the audience into his confidence, as *Trin.* 400 f.:

"PHILTO. But the door of the house to which I was going is opening. Isn't that nice? Lesbonicus, the very man I'm looking for, is coming out with his slave."

And *Aul.* 176 f.:

"MEGADORUS. I'd like to see Euclio, if he's at home. Ah, here he comes! He's on his way home from some place or other."<sup>24</sup>

We believe that enough has been said to prove that the favorite devices of the lower types of modern stage-production form the back-bone of Plautus' methods of securing his comic effects. Let us pass on without more ado to a discussion of points that establish equally well that he was careless of every other consideration but the eliciting of laughter.

<sup>22</sup>For other passages containing the comedy of "peering," v. *Bac.* 534, *Ep.* 526 ff., *Rud.* 331 ff., et al. Cf. Weise, op. cit., p. 72 f.

<sup>23</sup>Further comments infra II. B. 3.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. *As.* 403, and passim.

## II

### EVIDENCES OF LOOSE COMPOSITION WHICH PROVE A DISREGARD OF TECHNIQUE AND HENCE INDICATE THAT ENTERTAINMENT WAS THE SOLE AIM

#### A. *Solo speeches and passages.*

##### ✓1. Asides and soliloquies.

As it is often important for the audience to know the thoughts of stage characters, the aside and the soliloquy in all species of dramatic composition have always been recognized as the only feasible conventional mode of conveying them. According to the strictest canons of dramatic art, the ideally constructed play should be entirely free from this weakness. Mr. Gillette is credited with having written in "Secret Service" the first aside-less play. But this is abnormal and rather an affectation of technical skill. The aside is an accepted convention. But in the plays of Plautus we have a profuse riot of solo speeches and passages that transcends the conventional and becomes a gross weakness of composition, pointing plainly to a poverty of technique and hence further strengthening the conception of entertainment as the author's sole purpose. And often too, as we shall point out, this very form can be used for amusement. To attempt a complete collection of these passages would mean a citation of hundreds of lines, comprising a formidable percentage of all the verses.

And furthermore, the Plautine character is not so tame and spiritless as merely to think aloud. He has a fondness for actual conversation with himself that shows a noble regard for the value of his own society. This is attested by many passages, such as *Amph.* 381: *Etiam muttis?*; *Aul.* 52: *At ut scelesti sola secum murmurat*; *Aul.* 190: *Quid tu solus tecum loquere?*; *Bac.* 773: *Quis loquitur prope?*; *Cap.* 133: *Quis hic loquitur?*<sup>25</sup>

One character standing aside and commenting on the main action is a familiar situation and often productive of good fun. An excellent example is *Most.* 166 ff., where Philematium is performing her conventionally out-door toilet with the aid of her

<sup>25</sup>Cf. *As.* 447, *Cur.* 111, *Men.* 125, 478 f., 909, *Mer.* 364, 379, *Mil.* 275, *Most.* 548, *Per.* 99, *Poen.* 840, *Ps.* 445, 615, 908, *Rud.* 97, *St.* 88, *Trin.* 45, 567, *Truc.* 499, etc.



duenna Scapha. Philolaches stands on the other side of the stage and interjects remarks:

"PHILEM. Look at me please, Scapha dear; is this gown becoming? I want to please Philolaches, the apple of my eye. . . .

SC. Why deck yourself out, when your charm lies in your charming manners? It isn't gowns that lovers love, but what bellies out the gowns.

PHILO. (*Aside.*) God bless me, but Scapha's clever; the hussy has horse-sense. . . .

PHILEM. (*Pettishly.*) Well, then?

SC. What is it?

PHILEM. Look me over anyhow and see how this becomes me.

SC. The grace of your figure makes everything you wear becoming.

PHILO. (*Aside.*) Now for that speech, Scapha, I'll give you some present before the day is out"—and so on for a whole long scene.

The quips are amusing in an evident burlesque spirit. Such a scene was easily done on the broad Roman stage, whether it was a heritage from the use of the orchestra in Greek comedy, as LeGrand thinks,<sup>26</sup> or not. In similar vein, clever by-play on the part of the cunning Palaestrio would make a capital scene out of *Mil.* 1037 ff.<sup>27</sup> A perfectly unnatural but utterly amusing scene of the same type is *Amph.* 153-262, where Mercury apostrophizes his fists, and the quaking Sosia (cross-stage) is frightened to a jelly at the prospect of his early demise. In Cap. 966, Hegio, staid gentleman that he is, introduces an exceeding "rough" remark in the middle of a serious scene. The aside of Pseudolus in *Ps.* 636 f. could be rendered as a good-natured burlesque as follows:

"HARPAX. What's your name?

PS. (*Hopping forward and addressing audience with hand over mouth.*) The pander has a slave named Surus. I'll say I'm he. (*Hopping back and addressing Harpax.*) I'm Surus." Many other scenes were doubtless rendered by one character's thus stepping aside and confiding his ideas to the spectators, as for example *Aul.* 194 ff. and *Trin.* 895 ff. Often our characters blurt out their inmost thoughts to the public, as in *Cas.* 937 ff., with eavesdroppers conveniently placed, else what would become of the plot?

<sup>26</sup>*Daos*, p. 431 ff. See Dieterich, *Pulcinella*, Pl. II. Note esp. *As.* 851 ff.

<sup>27</sup>*Cf. Per.* 81 ff., 599 ff., *Poen.* 210 ff., et al.

The soliloquy is constantly used to keep the audience acquainted with the advance of the plot,<sup>28</sup> or to paint in narrative intervening events that connect the loose joints of the action. This is of course wholly inartistic, but may often find its true office in keeping a noisy, turbulent and uneducated audience aware of "what is going on." In many cases the soliloquy is in the nature of a reflection on the action and seems to bear all the ear-marks of a heritage from the original function of the tragic chorus.<sup>29</sup> It devolved upon the actor by sprightly mimicry to relieve, in these scenes, the tedium that appeals to the reader. So in *Cap.* 909 ff. the *canticum* of the *puer* becomes more than a mere stop-gap, if he acts out vividly the violence of Ergasilus; and in *Bac.* 1067 ff. the soliloquy would acquire humor, if confidentially directed at the audience. In *As.* 127 ff., as Argyrippus berates the *lena* within, it must be delivered with an abundance of pantomime.

good point

2. Lengthy monodies, monologues and episodical specialties.

Frequently the soliloquy takes the form of a long solo passage directed at the audience, while the action halts for a whole scene to allow the actor to regale his public with the poet's views on the sins of society, economic topics of the day, or topics of the by-gone days in Athens, and the like. The resemblance to the interpolated song and dance of musical comedy is most striking. The comparison is the more apt, as about two-thirds of the illustrative scenes referred to in the next paragraph are in *canticum*. It is a pity that the comic chorus had disappeared, or the picture were complete. That it is often on the actor's initial appearance that he sings his song or speaks his piece, strengthens the resemblance. But this is a natural growth under the influence of two publics, the Greek and the Roman, notably fond of declamation and oratory. LeGrand believes this a characteristic directly derived from a narrative form of Middle Comedy embodied in certain extant fragments.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup>V. *Amph.* 952-3, *As.* 118 ff., 243 ff., *Aul.* 67 ff., 667 ff., 701 ff., *Bac.* 170 ff., 349 ff., 573 ff., 761 ff., *Cas.* 504 ff., *Cis.* 120 ff., *Cur.* 216 ff., 591 ff., *Mer.* 544 ff., 588 ff., *Mil.* 464 ff., *Most.* 931 ff., 1041 ff., *Rud.* 1191 ff., *St.* 674 ff., et al.

<sup>29</sup>V. *Cas.* 424 ff., 759 ff., *Ep.* 81 ff., *Men.* 1039 ff., *Ps.* 1017 ff., 1052 ff., 1102 ff., *Rud.* 892 ff., 1281 ff., *St.* 641 ff., *Trin.* 199 ff., 1115 ff., *Truc.* 322 ff., 335 ff., 645 ff., 699 ff.

Cf. the treatment of Le Grand, *Daos*, p. 412 ff., where he has an analysis from a different point of view. The soliloquy and aside are evidently not so frequent in New Comedy.

<sup>30</sup>*Daos* p. 379. Cf. p. 550.

The slave class is the topic of many of these monodies: either the virtues of the loyal slave are extolled,<sup>31</sup> or the knavery of the cunning slave.<sup>32</sup> The parasite is "featured" too, when Ergasilus bewails the decline of his profession,<sup>33</sup> or Peniculus and Gelasimus indulge in haunting threnody on their perpetual lack of food.<sup>34</sup> Bankers, lawyers and panders come in for their share of satire.<sup>35</sup> Our favorite topic today, the frills and furbelows of woman's dress and its reform, held the boards of ancient Athens and Rome.<sup>36</sup> In *Mil.* 637 ff., Periplectomenus descants on the joys of the old bon vivant and the expense of a wife. The delights or pains of love,<sup>37</sup> the ruminations of old age,<sup>38</sup> marriage reform<sup>39</sup> and divorce,<sup>40</sup> the views of *meretrices* and their victims on the arts of their profession,<sup>41</sup> the habits of cooks,<sup>42</sup> the pride of valor and heroic deeds<sup>43</sup> are fruitful subjects. In *Cur.* 462 ff. the *choragus* interpolates a recital composed of topical allusions to the manners of different neighborhoods of Rome. We have two descriptions of dreams,<sup>44</sup> and a clever bit which paints a likeness between a man and a house.<sup>45</sup> In foreign vein is the lament of Palaestra in *Rud.* 185 ff., which sounds like an echo from tragedy. The appearance of the Fishermen's Chorus (*Rud.* 290 ff.) is wholly adventitious and seems designed to intensify the atmosphere of the seacoast, if indeed it has any purpose at all. In this category also belong the revels of the drunken Pseudolus with his song and dance,<sup>46</sup> and the final scene of the *St.*<sup>47</sup> where, the action of the slender plot over, the comedy slaves royster and dance with the harlot. When Ballio drives his herd before him, as he berates them merrily to the tune of a whip, we have an energetic and effective scene.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>31</sup>*Aul.* 587 ff., *Men.* 966 ff. Cf. *Most.* 858 ff. and *As.* 545 ff., a duologue in canticum.

<sup>32</sup>*Bac.* 640 ff. Cf. *Ps.* 767 ff.

<sup>33</sup>*Cap.* 461 ff., Cf. *Per.* 53 ff.

<sup>34</sup>*Men.* 77 ff., 446 ff., *St.* 155 ff.

<sup>35</sup>*Cur.* 371 ff., (Cf. 494 ff.), *Men.* 571 ff., *Poen.* 823 ff.

<sup>36</sup>*Ep.* 225 ff.

<sup>37</sup>*Cas.* 217 ff., *Trin.* 223 ff. (Cf. 660 ff.)

<sup>38</sup>*Men.* 753 ff.

<sup>39</sup>*Aul.* 475 ff. (496-536 branded as spurious by Weise, op. cit., pp. 42-44).

<sup>40</sup>*Mer.* 817 ff.

<sup>41</sup>*Poen.* 210 ff. (though not a solo), *Truc.* 22 ff., 210 ff., 551 ff.

<sup>42</sup>*Ps.* 790 ff.

<sup>43</sup>*Truc.* 482 ff.

<sup>44</sup>*Mer.* 825 ff., *Rud.* 593 ff.

<sup>45</sup>*Most.* 85 ff.

<sup>46</sup>*Ps.* 1246 ff.

<sup>47</sup>*St.* 683 to end.

<sup>48</sup>*Ps.* 133 ff. For further passages of the episodical type, cf. *Bac.* 925 ff. (v. supra under "bombast," I. A. 1), *Poen.* 449 ff., *Rud.* 906 ff., *Trin.* 820 ff. (v. supra under "burlesque," I. A. 3).

3. Direct address of the audience.

It is a well-established principle that the most intimate cognizance of the spectator's existence is a characteristic of the lowest types of dramatic production (v. Part I, § 1, fin.). The use of soliloquy, aside and monologue all indicate the effort of the lines to put the player on terms of intimacy with his public. But even this is transcended by the frequent recurrence in jocular vein of deliberate, conscious and direct address of the audience, when they are called by name. In *Truc.* 482 Stratophanes says: Ne expectetis, spectatores, meas pugnas dum praedicem. . . . In *Poen.* 597 we are told: Aurumst profecto hic, spectatores, sed comicum; i. e., "stage-money." During a halt in the action of the *Ps.* (573) we are graciously informed: Tibicen vos interibi hic delectaverit. Mercury's comments (*Amph.* 449-550 passim), probably with copious buffoonery, on the leave-taking of Jove and Alcmena contain the remark (507): Observatote, quam blande mulieri palpabitur. At the close of the *Men.* (1157 ff.) Messenio announces an auction and invites the spectators to attend.

When Euclio discovers the loss of his hoard, he rushes forth in wild lament. In his extremity he turns to the audience (*Aul.* 715 ff.):

"EUC. I beg, I beseech, I implore you, help me and show me the man that stole it. (*Picking out one of the spectators, probably a tough looking "bruiser", and stretching out his hand to him.*) What do you say? I know I can trust you. I can tell by your face you're honest. (*To the whole audience, in response to the laughter sure to ensue.*) What's the matter? What are you laughing at?" etc.

Moilère has imitated this scene very closely in *L'Avare* (IV. 7), with a super-Plautine profusion of verbiage.

In *Mil.* 200 ff. Periplecomenus obligingly acts as guide and personal conductor to the manoeuvres of Palaestrio's mind, while it is in the throes of evolving a stratagem. Palaestrio of course indulges in vivid, pointed pantomime:

"PER. I'll step aside here awhile. (*To audience, pointing to Palaestrio.*) Look yonder, please, how he stands with serried brow in anxious contemplation. His fingers smite his breast; I trow, he fain would summon forth his heart. Presto, change! His left hand he rests upon his left thigh. With the fingers of his right he reckons out his scheme. Ha! He whacks his right thigh!" etc.

It is very amusing too, when Jupiter in *Amph.* 861 ff. strolls in and speaks his little piece to the pit:

"JUP. I am the renowned Amphitruo, whose slave is Sosia; you know, the fellow that turns into Mercury at will. I dwell in my sky-parlor and become Jupiter the while, ad libitum."<sup>49</sup>

Even in olden times Euanthius censured this practice (*de Com.* III. 6)<sup>50</sup>: <Terentius> nihil ad populum facit actorem velut extra comoediam loqui, quod vitium Plauti frequentissimum.

Naturally we shall hardly consider under this head the speech of the whole *grex*, or the "Nunc plaudite" of an actor that closes a number of the plays. It is no more than the bowing or curtain-calls of today,<sup>51</sup> unless it was an emphatic announcement to the audience that the play was over.

B. *Inconsistencies and carelessness of composition.*

We have referred above to the voluminous mass of inconsistencies, contradictions and psychological improbabilities collected by Langen in his *Plautinische Studien*. He really succeeds in finding the crux of the situation in recognizing that these features are inherent in Plautus' style and are frequently employed solely for comic effect, though he is often overcome by a natural Teutonic stolidity. He aptly points out that Plautus in his selection of originals has in the main chosen plots with more vigorous action than Terence. We shall have occasion to quote him at intervals, but desire to develop this topic quite independently.

1. Pointless badinage and padded scenes.

Strong evidence of loose construction and lack of a technical dramatic ideal is contained in the large number of scenes padded out with pointless badinage, often tiresome, often wholly episodic in nature, as the monodies, and putting for a time a complete check on the plot. The most striking of these is *Aul.* 631 ff., when Euclio, suspecting Strobilus of the theft of his gold, pounces upon him and belabors him:

"STR. (*Howling and dancing and making violent efforts to free himself.*) What the plague has got hold of you? What have you to do with me, you dotard? Why pick on me? Why are you grabbing me? Don't beat me! (*Succeeds in breaking loose.*)

<sup>49</sup>Cf. further *Amph.* 463, 998, *Bac.* 1072, *Cap.* 69 ff., *Cas.* 879, *Cis.* 146, 678, *Men.* 880, *Mer.* 313, *Mil.* 862, *Most.* 280, 354, 708 ff., *Poen.* 921 f., *Ps.* 124, *St.* 224, 446, 674 ff., *Truc.* 109 ff., 463 ff., 965 ff. Cf. infra II. B. 5.

<sup>50</sup>In Donat. ed. Wessner.

<sup>51</sup>V. *As.*, *Bac.*, *Cap.*, *Cis.*, *Cur.*, *Ep.*, *Men.*, *Mer.*, *Most.*, *Per.*, *Rud.*, *St.* Cf. *Cas.* 1013 ff., *Poen.* 1370 f.

EUC. (*Shaking stick at him.*) You first-class jailbird, do you dare ask me again? You're not a thief, but three thieves rolled into one!

STR. (*Whining and nursing bruises.*) What did I steal from you?

EUC. (*Still threatening.*) Give it back here, I say?

STR. (*Trembling and edging off.*) What is it you want me to give back?

EUC. (*Watching him narrowly.*) You ask?

STR. I tell you, I didn't take a thing from you.

EUC. (*Impatiently.*) All right, but hand over what you did take! (*Pause.*) Well, well!

STR. Well, what?

EUC. You can't get away with it.

STR. (*Bolder.*) Look here, what do you want? . . .

EUC. (*Angrier and angrier.*) Hand it over, I say! Stop quibbling! I'm not trifling now!

STR. Now what shall I hand over? Speak out! Why don't you give the thing a name? I swear I never touched or handled anything of yours.

EUC. Put out your hands.

STR. There you are! I've done so. See them?

EUC. (*Scrutinizing his hands closely.*) All right. Now put out the third too.

STR. (*Aside, growing angry.*) The foul fiends of madness have possessed this doddering idiot. (*Majestically.*) Confess you wrong me?

EUC. (*Dancing in frenzy.*) To the utmost, since I don't have you strung up! And that's what'll happen too, if you don't confess.

STR. (*Shouting.*) Confess what?

EUC. What did you steal from here? (*Pointing to his house.*)

STR. Strike me if I stole anything of yours, (*Aside to audience*) and if I don't wish I'd made off with it.

EUC. Come now, shake out your cloak.

STR. (*Doing so.*) As you please.

EUC. (*Stooping to see if anything falls out.*) Haven't got it under your shirt? (*Pounces upon him and ransacks clothing.*)

STR. (*Resignedly.*) Search me, if you like;" and so on with "Give it back," What is it? "Put out your right hand," etc., etc.

Molière again imitated almost slavishly (*L'Avare*, V. 3). Long-winded as the thing is, it is clear that the liveliness of the action not only relieves it, but could make it immensely amusing. At least it is superior to the average vaudeville skit of the present day. It must not be forgotten too that, as Plautus was in close touch with his players, he could have done much of the stage-directing himself and might even have worked up some parts to fit the peculiar talents of certain actors, as is regularly done in the modern "tailor-made drama."

There are numbers of scenes of the sort quoted above, where the apparent monotony and verbal padding could be converted into coin for laughter by the clever comedian. *Amph.* 551-632 could be worked up poco a poco crescendo e animato; in *Poen.* 504 ff., Agorastocles and the *Advocati* bandy extensive rhetoric; in *Trin.* 276 ff., the action is suspended while Philto proves himself Polonius' ancestor in his long-winded sermonizing to Lysiteles and his insistent *laudatio temporis acti*; in *St.* 326 ff., as Pinacium, the *servus currens*, finally succeeds in "arriving" out of breath (he has been running since 274), bursting with the vast importance of his news, he postpones the delivery of his tidings till 371 while he indulges in irrelevant badinage. This is pure buffoonery. And we can instance scene upon scene where the self-evident padding can either furnish an excuse for agile histrionism, or become merely tiresome in its iteration.<sup>52</sup> The danger of the latter was even recognized by our poet, when, at the end of much word-fencing, Acanthio asks Charinus if his desire to talk quietly is prompted by fear of waking "the sleeping spectators" (*Mer.* 160). This was probably no exaggeration.

When the padding takes the form of mutual "spoofing," the scene assumes an uncanny likeness to the usual lines of a modern "high-class vaudeville duo." Note Leonida and Libanus, the merry slaves of the *As.* in 297 ff., Toxilus and Sagaristio in the *Per.*, Milphio and Syncerastus in the *Poen.* (esp. 851 ff.), Pseudolus and Simia in *Ps.* 905 ff., Trachalio and Gripus in *Rud.* 938 ff., Stichus and Sagarinus in the final scene of the *St.*, and in *Ps.* 1167 ff.

<sup>52</sup>*V. Bac.* 235-367, *Cap.* 835-99, *Cis.* 203 ff., 540-630, 705 ff., *Cur.* 251-73 and passim (this play is full of bandying of quips), *Ep.* 1 ff., *Men.* 137-81, 602-67, *Mer.* 474 ff., 708 ff., 866 ff., *Most.* 633 ff., 717 ff., 885 ff., *Per.* 1 ff., 201 ff., *Poen.* 210 ff., *Ps.* 653 ff. and passim, *Rud.* 485 ff. (the jokes here are unusually good), 780 ff., *St.* 579 ff., *Trin.* 39 ff., 843 ff., *Truc.* 95 ff.

Harpax is unmercifully "chaffed" by Simo and Ballio. Or, in view of the surrounding drama, we might better compare these roysterers to the "team" of low comedians often grafted on a musical comedy, where their antics effectually prevent the tenuous plot from becoming vulgarly prominent. y.o.o.

2. Inconsistencies of character and situation.

The Plautine character is never a consistent human character. He is rather a personified trait, a broad caricature on magnified foibles of some type of mankind. There is never any character development, no chastening. We leave our friends as we found them. They may exhibit the outward manifestation of grief, joy, love, anger, but their marionette nature cannot be affected thereby. That we should find inconsistencies in character portrayal under these circumstances, is not only to be expected, but is a mathematical certainty. The poet cares not; they must only dance, dance, dance!

Persistent moralizers, such as Megaronides in the *Trin.*, who serve but as a foil from whom the revelry "sticks fiery off," descend themselves at moments to bandying the merriest quips (Scene I.) In *Ep.* 382 ff., the moralizing of Periphanes is counterfeit coinage. Gilded youths such as Calidorus of the *Ps.* begin by asking (290 f.): "Could I by any chance trip up father, who is such a wide-awake old boy?", and end by rolling their eyes upward with: "And besides, if I could, filial piety prevents." The Menaechmi twins are eminently respectable, but they cheerfully purloin mantles, bracelets and purses. Hanno of the *Poen.* should according to specifications be a staid *pater familias*, but Plautus imputes to him a layer of the *Punica fides* that he knew his public would take delight in "booing." And the old gentleman enters into a plot (1090) to chaff elaborately his newly-found long-lost daughters, whom he has spent a lifetime in seeking, before disclosing his identity to them (1211 ff.). Saturio's daughter in the *Per.* is at one time the very model of maidenly modesty and wisdom (336 ff.), at others an accomplished intriguante and demi-mondaine (549 ff., esp. 607 ff.). When the plot of the *Ep.* is getting hopelessly tangled, of a sudden it is magically resolved as by a *deus ex machina* and everybody decides to "shake and make up." ✓

Slaves ever fearful of the mills or quarries are yet prone to the most abominable "freshness" towards their masters. The



irrepressible Pseudolus in reading a letter from Calidorus' mistress says (27 ff.):

"What letters! Humph! I'm afraid the Sibyl is the only person capable of interpreting these.

CAL. Oh why do you speak so rudely of those lovely letters written on a lovely tablet with a lovely hand?

PS. Well, would you mind telling me if hens have hands? For these look to me very like hen-scratches.

CAL. You insulting beast! Read, or return the tablet!

PS. Oh, I'll read all right, all right. Just focus your mind on this.

CAL. (*Pointing vacantly to his head.*) Mind? It's not here.

PS. What! Go get one quick then!"<sup>53</sup>

In order that the machinations of these cunning slaves may mature, it is usually necessary to portray their victims as the veriest fools. Witness the cock-and-bull story by which Stasimus, in *Trin.* 515 ff., convinces Philto that his master's land is an undesirable real estate prospect. Dordalus in *Per.* (esp. 493 ff.) exhibits a certain amount of caution in face of Toxilus' "confidence game," but that he should be victimized at all stamps him as a caricature.

LeGrand is certainly right in pronouncing the cunning slave a pure convention, adapted from the Greek and so unsuitable to Roman society that even Plautus found it necessary to apologize for their unrestrained gambols, on the ground that 'that was the way they did in Athens!'<sup>54</sup>

Certain of the characters are caricatures *par excellence*, embodiments of a single attribute. Leaena of the *Cur.* is the perpetually thirsty *lena*: "Wine, wine, wine!"<sup>55</sup> Cleaerata of the *As.* is a plain caricature, but is exceptionally cleverly drawn as the *lena* with the mordant tongue. Phronesium's thirst in the *Truc.*, is gold, gold, gold! The *danista* of the *Most.* finds the whole expression of his nature in the cry of "Faenus!"<sup>56</sup> Assuredly, he is the progenitor of the modern low-comedy Jew: "I vant my inderesd!" Calidorus of the *Ps.* and Phaedromus of the *Cur.* are but bleeding

<sup>53</sup>Cf. Sosia in *Amph.* (esp. 659 ff.), Libanus in *As.* 1 ff., Palinurus in *Cur.*, Acanthio in *Mer.* (esp. 137 ff.), Milphio in *Poen.*, Sceparnio in *Rud.* (esp. 104 ff.) and Trachalio, Pinacium in *St.* (esp. 331 ff.), Stasimus in *Trin.*

<sup>54</sup>*St.* 446 ff., Prol. *Cas.* 67 ff. For an exhaustive discussion of the 'truth to life' of the characters, v. LeGrand, *Daos*, Part I, Chap. V.

<sup>55</sup>V. esp. 96 ff.

<sup>56</sup>603 ff.

hearts dressed up in clothes. The *milites gloriosi* are all cartoons;<sup>57</sup> and the perpetually moralizing pedagogue Lydus of the *Bac.* becomes funny, instead of egregiously tedious, if acted as a broad burlesque.

The panders<sup>58</sup> are all manifest caricatures, too, especially the famous Ballio of the *Ps.*, whom even Lorenz properly describes as "der Einbegriff aller Schlechtigkeit," though he deprecates the part as "eine etwas zu grell and zu breit angeführte Schilderung."<sup>59</sup> "Ego scelestus," says Ballio himself.<sup>60</sup> He calmly and unctuously pleads guilty to every charge of "liar, thief, perjurer," etc., and can never be induced to lend an ear until the cabalistic charm "Lucrum!" is pronounced (264).

The famous miser Euclio has given rise to an inordinate amount of unnecessary comment. Lamarre<sup>61</sup> is at great pains to defend Plautus from "le reproche d'avoir introduit dans la peinture de son principal personnage <Euclio> des traits outrés et hors de nature." Indeed, he possesses few traits in accord with normal human nature. But curiously enough, as we learn from the *argumenta* (in view of the loss of the genuine end of the *Aul.*), Euclio at the *dénouement* professes himself amply content to bid an everlasting farewell to his stolen hoard, and bestows his health and blessing on "the happy pair." This apparent conversion, with absolutely nothing dramatic to furnish an introduction or pretext for it, has caused Langen to depart from his usual judicious scholarship. After much hair-splitting he solemnly pronounces it "psychologically possible."<sup>62</sup> LeGrand points out<sup>63</sup> that his change of heart is not a conversion, but merely a professed reconciliation to the loss. But there is no need for all this pother. The simple truth is that Plautus was through with his humorous complication and was ready to top it off with a happy ending. It is the forerunner of modern musical comedy, where the grouchy millionaire papa is propitiated at the last moment (perhaps by the pleadings

<sup>57</sup>Pyrgopolinices in *Mil.*, Therapontigonus in *Cur.*, the *miles* in *Ep.*, Anthemonides in *Poen.*; Stratophanes in *Truc.* is not so violent.

<sup>58</sup>Cappadox in *Cur.*, Dordalus in *Per.*, Lycus in *Poen.*, Labrax in *Rud.* Similarly the *lenae*.

<sup>59</sup>Intro. to ed. of *Ps.*

<sup>60</sup>355. Cf. 360 ff., 974 ff.

<sup>61</sup>*Hist. de la lit. lat.* Bk. II, Ch. III., Sec. 4, p. 307.

<sup>62</sup>*Plaut. Stud.*, p. 105.

<sup>63</sup>*Daos*, pp. 557 f. Cf. 218 f.

of the handsome widow), and similarly consents to his daughter's marriage with the handsome, if impecunious, ensign.

### 3. Looseness of dramatic construction.

Lorenz with commendable insight has pointed out<sup>64</sup> that Τύχη, the goddess of Chance, is the motive power of the Plautine plot, as distinguished from the μοῖρα of tragedy. A student of Plautus readily recognizes this point. The entire development of the *Rud.* and *Poen.* exemplifies it in the highest degree. Hanno in the *Poen.*, in particular, meets first of all, in the strange city of Calydon, the very man he is looking for! When Pseudolus is racking his wits for a stratagem, Harpax obligingly drops in with all the requisites. The ass-dealer in the *As.* is so ridiculously fortuitous that it savors of childlike naiveté.

Characters are perpetually entering just when wanted. We hear "Optume advenis" and "Eccum ipsum video" so frequently that they become as meaningless as "How d'y'e do!"<sup>65</sup>; though, as shown above,<sup>66</sup> even this very weakness could at moments be made the pretext for a mild laugh.

For a complete catalogue of the formidable mass of inconsistencies and contradictions that throng the plays, the reader is referred to the *Plautinische Studien* of Langen, as aforesaid. It will be of passing interest to recall one or two. In *Cas.* 530 Lysidamus goes to the "forum" and returns 32 verses later complaining that he has wasted the whole day standing "advocate" for a kinsman. But this difficulty is resolved, if we accept the theory of Prof. Kent (TAPA. XXXVII), that the change of acts which occurs in between, is a conventional excuse for any lapse of time, in Roman comedy as well as in Greek tragedy. But it is extremely doubtful that Prof. Kent succeeds in establishing the truth of this view in the case of Roman comedy. We see no convincing reason for departing from the accepted theory, as expressed by Duff (*A Literary History of Rome*, pp. 196-7): "In Plautus' time a play proceeded continuously from the lowering of the curtain at the beginning to its rise at the end, save for short breaks filled generally by simple music from the *tibicen* (*Ps.* 573). The division into

<sup>64</sup>Introd. to *Ps.* Cf. *Daos*, p. 452 ff.

<sup>65</sup>E. g., *Amph.* 957, *Bac.* 844, *Cas.* 308, *Men.* 898, *Mil.* 1137, 1188, *Per.* 301, 543, *Poen.* 576, *Rud.* 1209, *St.* 400-1, *Trin.* 482.

<sup>66</sup>Part II, Sec. I. B. 2.

scenes is ancient and regularly indicated in manuscripts of Plautus and Terence."

Langen seems surprised<sup>67</sup> when Menaechmus Sosicles, on beholding his twin for the first time (*Men.* 1062), though he was the object of a six years' search, wades through some twenty lines of amazed argument before Messenio (with marvelous cunning!) hits on the true explanation. It is of course conceived in a burlesque spirit. What would become of the comic action if Menaechmus II simply walked up to Menaechmus I and remarked: "Hello, brother, don't you remember me?"

That the seven months of *Most.* 470 miraculously change into six months in 954 is the sort of mistake possible to any writer. In the *Amph.* 1053 ff., Alcmena is in labor apparently a few minutes after consorting with Jupiter; but the change of acts *may* account for the lapse of time, here as in *Cas.* 530 ff.

But after the exhaustive work of Langen, we need linger no longer in this well-ploughed field. We repeat, the evidence all points irresistibly to the conclusion that Plautus is wholly careless of his dramatic machinery so long as it moves. The laugh's the thing!

The *St.* is an apt illustration of the probable workings of Plautus' mind. The virtue of the Penelope-like Pamphila and Panegyris proves too great a strain and unproductive of merriment. The topic gradually vanishes as the drolleries of the parasite Gelasimus usurp the boards. He in turn gives way to the hilarious buffoonery of the two slaves. The result is a succession of loose-jointed scenes.<sup>68</sup> The *Aul.* too is fragmentary and episodic. The *Trin.* is insufferably long-winded, with insufficient comic accompaniment. The *Cis.* is a wretched piece of vacuous inanity.<sup>69</sup>

#### 4. Roman admixture and topical allusions.

Plautus' frequent forgetfulness of his Greek environment and the interjection of Roman references—what De Quincey calls "anatopism"—is another item of careless composition too well known to need more than passing mention. The repeated appear-

<sup>67</sup>P. 157.

<sup>68</sup>Cf. *Daos*, p. 60.

<sup>69</sup>Cf. in general the conclusions of LeGrand, *Daos*, p. 550, and his admirable analysis (Part II) of "La structure des comédies." He has recognized the existence of a number of the characteristics treated above, but his discussion is in different vein and with a different object in view.

ance of the *Velabrum*,<sup>70</sup> or *Capitolium*,<sup>71</sup> or *circus*,<sup>72</sup> or *senatus*, or *dictator*,<sup>73</sup> or *centuriata comitia*,<sup>74</sup> or *plebiscitum*,<sup>75</sup> and a host of others in the Greek investiture, becomes after a while a matter of course to us. We see however no need to quarrel with *forum*; it was Plautus' natural translation for *ἀγορά*. But it all adds inevitably and relentlessly to our argument—Plautus was heedless of the petty demands of technique and realism. His attention was too much occupied in devising means of amusement.

The occasional topical allusions belong in the same category as above; for example, the allusion to the Punic war (*Cis.* 202),<sup>76</sup> the *lex Platoria* (*Ps.* 303, *Rud.* 1381-2), Naeivius' imprisonment (*Mil.* 211-2), Attalus of Pergamum (*Per.* 339, *Poen.* 664), Antiochus the Great (*Poen.* 693-4). Again we have a modern parallel: the topics of the day are a favorite resort of the lower types of present-day stage production.

#### 5. Jokes on the dramatic machinery.

But the most extreme stage of intimate jocularly is reached when the last sorry pretense of drama is discarded and the dramatic machinery itself becomes the subject of jest. So in the *Cas.* 1006 the cast is warned: *Hanc ex longa longiorem ne faciamus fabulam*. In *Per.* 159-60 Saturio wants to know where to get his daughter's projected disguise:

"SAT. *πῶθεν* ornamenta?"

TOX. *Abs chorago sumito. Dare debet: praebenda aediles locaverunt.*" (Cf. *Trin.* 858.)

Even the *Ps.*, heralded as dramatically one of the best of the plays, yields the following: *Horum caussa haec agitur spectatorum fabula* (720); *hanc fabulam dum transigam* (562) and following speech; *verba quae in comoediis solent lenoni dici* (1081-2); *quam in aliis comoediis fit* (1240); *quin vocas spectatores simul?* (1332). In *St.* 715 ff., the action of the play is interrupted while the boisterous slaves give the musician a drink. From the *Poen.* comes a gem that will bear quoting at length (550 ff.):

<sup>70</sup>*Cap.* 489, *Cur.* 483.

<sup>71</sup>*Cur.* 269, et al.

<sup>72</sup>*Mil.* 991.

<sup>73</sup>*Ps.* 416, et al.

<sup>74</sup>*Ps.* 1232.

<sup>75</sup>*Ps.* 748. For a fairly complete collection, v. LeGrand, *Daos*, p. 44 ff. Cf. Middleton and Mills, *Students' Companion to Latin Authors*, p. 20 ff.

<sup>76</sup>Cf. West in A. J. P. VIII. 15. Cf. note 1, Part II, *supra*.

Omnia istaec scimus iam nos, si hi spectatores sciant.  
 Horunc hic nunc causa haec agitur spectatorum fabula:  
 Hos te satius est docere ut, quando agas, quid agas sciant.  
 Nos tu ne curassis: scimus rem omnem, quippe omnes simul.  
 Didicimus tecum una, ut respondere possimus tibi.<sup>77</sup>

This is the final degeneration into the realm of pure foolery. It is a patent declaration: "This is only a play; laugh and we are content." Once more we venture to point a parallel on the modern stage, in the vaudeville comedian who interlards his dancing with comments such as: "I hate to do this, but it's the only way I can earn a living."

#### 6. Use of stock plots and characters.

We must touch finally, but very lightly, on the commonplaces of stock plots and characters. The whole array of puppets is familiar to us all: the cunning slave, the fond or licentious papa, the spend-thrift son and their inevitable confrères appear in play after play with relentless regularity. The close correspondence of many plots is also too familiar to need discussion.<sup>78</sup> The glimmering of originality in the plot of the *Cap.* called for special advertisement.<sup>79</sup> In the light of the foregoing evidence, the pertinence of these facts for us, we reiterate, is that Plautus merely adopted the New Comedy form as his comic medium, and, while leaving his originals in the main untouched, took what liberties he desired with them, with the single-minded purpose of making his public laugh.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup>Cf. *Amph.* 861 ff., *As.* 174 f., *Cap.* 778, *Cur.* 464, *Mer.* 160, *Poen.* 1224.

<sup>78</sup>Cf. *Daos*, Part I, Chap. III: Les personnages, and p. 303 ff.; Mommsen, *Hist.* pp. 141 ff.

<sup>79</sup>Prol., 53 ff.

<sup>80</sup>For a discussion of the relation of Plautus to his originals, v. Schuster, *Quomodo Plautus Attica exemplaria transtulerit*; LeGrand, *Daos*, passim; Ostermayer, *de hist. fab. in com. Pl.*; Ritschl, *Par.* 271, etc. The efforts to distinguish Plautus from his models have so far been fragmentary and abortive and will not advance appreciably until a complete play that he adapted has been found. At any rate, the discussion has no real bearing on our subject, since we can consider only the plays as actually transmitted; their sources cannot affect our argument. The comparisons in *Daos* seem to indicate that Plautus did not debase his originals so much as Mommsen, Körting, Schlegel and others had thought. Even in 1881, Kiessling (*Anal. Plaut.* II. 9) boldly expresses the opinion: "Atque omnino Plautus multo pressius Atticorum exemplarium vestigia secutus est quam hodie vulgo arbitrantur". Cf. Kellogg in *PAPA*. XLIV (1913).

## IN CONCLUSION

In contrast to these grotesqueries certain individual scenes and plays stand out with startling distinctness as possessed of wit and humor of high order. The description by Cleaereta of the relations of lover, mistress and *lena* is replete with biting satire (*As.* 177 ff., 215 ff.). The finale of the same play is irresistibly comic. In *Aul.* 731 ff. real sparks issue from the verbal cross-purposes of Euclio and Lyconides over the words "pot" and "daughter." The *Bac.* is an excellent play, marred by padding. When the sisters chaff the old men as "sheep" (1120 ff.), the humor is naturalistic and human. The *Cas.*, uproarious and lewd as it is, becomes excruciatingly amusing if the mind is open to appreciating humor in the broadest spirit. The discourse of Periplecomenus (*Mil.* 637 ff.) is marked by homely satirical wisdom. In the *Ps.* the badinage of the name-character is appreciably superior to most of the incidental quips. Pseudolus generously compliments Charinus on beating him at his own game of repartee (743). When Weise (*Die Komödien des Plautus*, p. 181) describes *Ps.* IV. 7 as "eine der ausgezeichnetsten Szenen, die es irgend giebt," his superlative finds a better justification than usual.

When Menaechmus Sosicles sees fit "to put an antic disposition on," we have a scene which, while eminently farcical, is signally clever and dramatically effective. Witness the imitation by Shakespeare in *The Comedy of Errors*, IV. 4, and in spirit by modern farce; for instance, in *A Night Off*, when the staid old Professor feels the recrudescence of his youthful aspirations to attend a prize-fight, he simulates madness as a prelude to dashing wildly away.

The following from *Rud.* (160 ff.) is theatrical but tremendously effective and worthy of the highest type of drama. Sceparnio, looking off-stage, spies Ampelisca and Palaestra tossed about in a boat. He addresses Daemones:

"SC. But O Palaemon! Hallowed comrade of Neptune . . . what scene meets my eye?

DAE. What do you see?

SC. I see two poor lone women sitting in a bit of a boat. How the poor creatures are being tossed about! Hoorah! Hoorah! Fine! The waves are whirling their boat past the rocks into the shallows. A pilot couldn't have steered straighter. I swear I never saw waves more high. They're safe if they escape those

breakers. Now, now, danger! One is overboard! Ah, the water's not deep: she'll swim out in a minute. Hooray! See the other one, how the wave tossed her out! She is up, she's on her way shoreward; she's safe!"

Sceparnio clasps his hands, jumps up and down, grasps the shaking *Daemones* convulsively and communicates his excitement to the audience. It is a piece of thrilling theatrical declamation and must have wrought the spectators up to a high pitch. In general, the *Rud.* is a superior play.

In *Cas.* 229 ff. there is developed a piece of faithful and entertaining character-drawing, as the old roué Lysidamus fawns upon his militant spouse Cleostrata, with the following as its climax:

"CLE. (*Sniffing.*) Ha! Whence that odor of perfumes, eh?  
LYS. The jig's up."

In the whole panorama of Plautine personae the portrayal of Alcmena in the *Amph.* is unique, for she is drawn with absolute sincerity and speaks nothing out of character. Certainly no parody can be made out of the nobly spoken lines 633-52, which lend a genuine air of tragedy to the professed *tragi(co)comoedia* (59, 63); unless we think of the lady's unwitting compromising condition (surely too subtle a thought for the original audience). Note also the exalted tone of 831-4, 839-42. But all through this scene Sosia is prancing around, prating nonsense, and playing the buffoon, so that perchance even here the nobility becomes but a foil for the revelry. And in 882-955 his royal godship Jove clowns it to the lady's truly minted sentiments.

No, we are far from attempting to deny to Plautus all dramatic technique, skill in character painting and cleverness of situation, but he was never hide-bound by any technical considerations. He felt free to break through the formal bonds of his selected medium at will. He had wit, esprit and above all a knowledge of his audience; and of human nature generally, or else he could not have had such a trenchant effect on the literature of all time.

At any rate, the above lonely landmarks cannot affect our comprehensive estimate of the *mise-en-scène*. Enough has been said, we believe, in our discussion of the criticism and acting and in our analysis of his dramatic values, to show that the aberrations of Plautus' commentators have been due to their failure to reach the crucial point: the absolute license with which his plays were acted and intended to be acted is at once the explanation of their



absurdities and deficiencies. This was true in a far less degree of Terence, who dealt in plots more *stataria* and less *motoria*.<sup>81</sup> Though using the same store of models, he endeavored to produce an artistically constructed play, which should make some honest effort to "hold the mirror up to nature." We are convinced that even his extensive use of *contaminatio* was designed to evolve a better plot. The extravagance of Plautus is toned down in Terence to a reasonable verisimilitude and a far more "gentlemanly" mode of fun-making that was appropriate to one in the confidence of the aristocratic Scipionic circle. But when all is said and done, Terence lacks the vivid primeval "Volkswitz" of Plautus. We dare only skirt the edges of this extensive subject.<sup>82</sup>

Above all, our noble jester *succeeds* in his mission of laugh-producing. But his methods are not possessed in the main of dramatic respectability. And it must be apparent that our analysis and citations have covered the bulk of the plays.

We conclude then that the prevalence of inherent defects of composition and the lack of serious motive, coupled with the author's constant and conscious employment of the implements of broad farce and extravagant burlesque, impel us inevitably to the conclusion that we have before us a species of composition which, while following a dramatic form, is not inherently drama, but a variety of entertainment that may be described as a compound of comedy, farce and burlesque; while the accompanying music, which would lend dignity to tragedy or grand opera, merely heightens the humorous effect and lends the color of musical comedy or opera bouffe.<sup>83</sup> Körting is right in calling it mere entertainment, Mommsen is right in calling it caricature, but we maintain that it is professedly mere entertainment, that it is consciously caricature and if it fulfills these functions we have no right to criticise it on other grounds. If we attempt a serious critique of it as drama, we have at once on our hands a capricious mass of dramatic unrealities and absurdities: bombast, burlesque, extravagance, horse-play, soliloquies, asides, direct address of the

<sup>81</sup>Euanthius, *de Com.* IV. 4.

<sup>82</sup>For an interesting comparison of Plautus and Terence, v. Spengel, *Über die lateinische Komödie*, (Munich 1878).

<sup>83</sup>The importance of the music is indicated by the transmission of the composer's name in all extant *didascaliae*, esp. those of Terence. V. Klotz, *Altrom. Met.* p. 384 ff.

audience, pointless quips, and so on. The minute we accept it as a consciously conceived medium for amusement only, we have a highly effective theatrical mechanism for the unlimited production of laughter. And, in fact, every shred of evidence, however scant, goes to show that the histrionism must have been conceived in a spirit of extreme liveliness, abandon and extravagance in gesture and declamation, that would not confine the actor to faithful portrayal in character, but would allow him scope and license to resort to any means whatsoever to bestir laughter amongst a not over-stolid audience.













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